

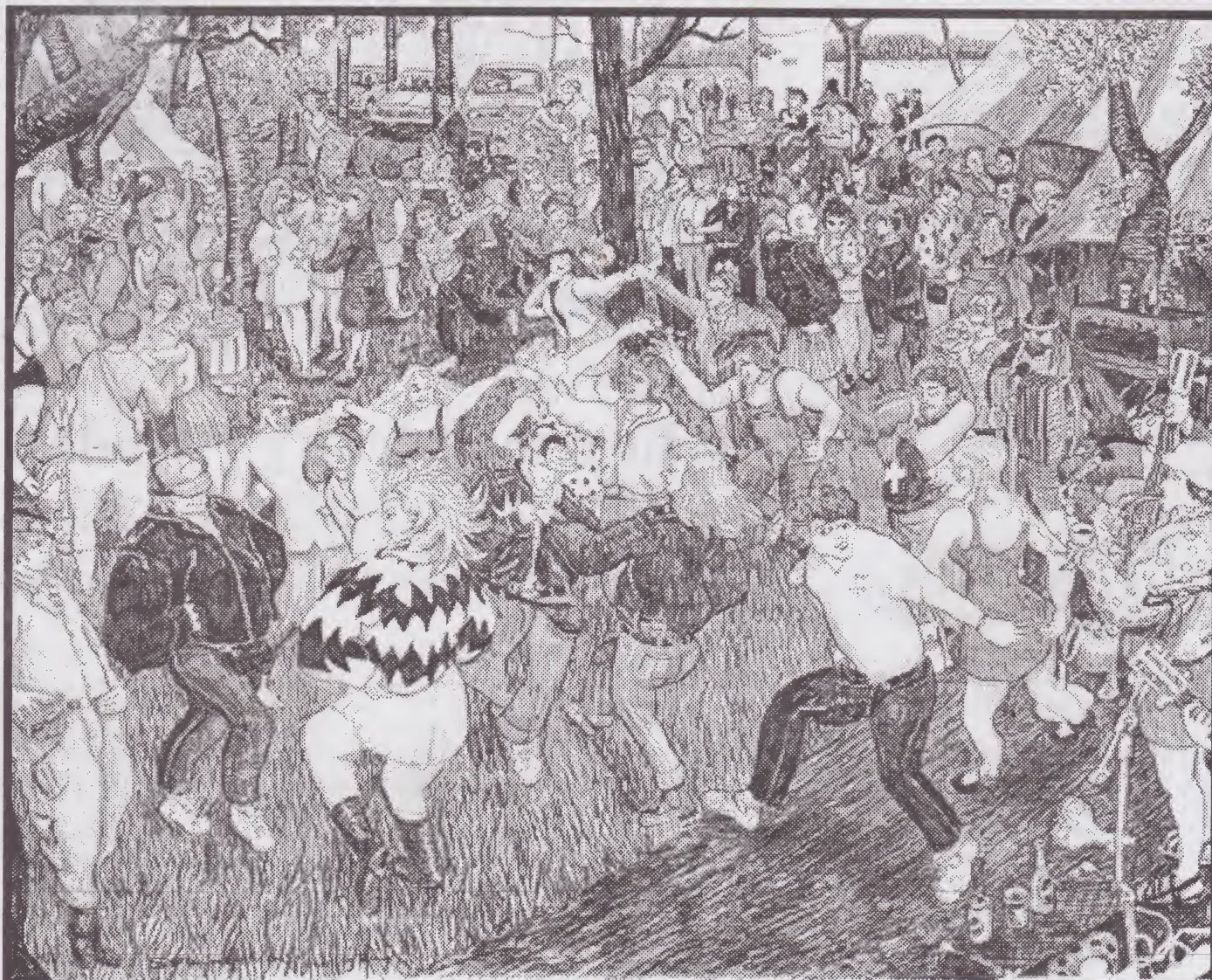


Fifth estate

Summer 2003

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\$3.00



Music & Dance

Hakim Bey's "Secret Theater," Revolution as
Festival, Devil's Music, Sweet Ecstasy, Joe Hill,
plus "Not our Troops, Not Our Empire"



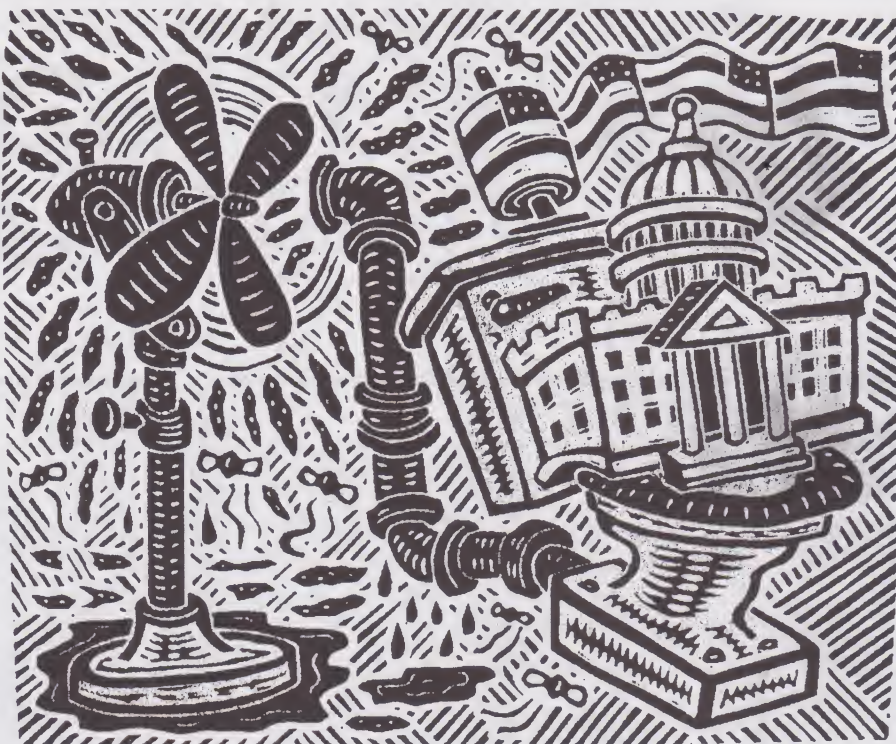
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We dedicate this Issue to the World-Wide Peace Movement & to Rachel Corrie: Martyr for Justice

Following the Empire's triumphal march to Baghdad, it seems appropriate to express our deep regret at being unable to stop Bush's long-planned war to control Middle East oil, while simultaneously celebrating our participation in history's largest mass movement for peace.

Our sadness at the slaughter perpetrated by the US war machine and our dismay at the Empire's advance is balanced by the thought that this is yet another battle along the path to eliminating the rule of elites forever. And, this time we mobilized ourselves in the tens of millions in peaceful demonstrations and in street battles. At least 7,500 were arrested in direct actions to stop the Iraq war in the US alone.

But for some, the cost was greater than arrest. We dedicate this issue to Rachel Corrie, who was murdered by a US financed Israeli bulldozer in Palestine. Others fell as well to the Republican Guard of the Empire. We honor them all.



Arundhati Roy: “Refuse the Victory Parade”

Our freedoms were not granted to us by any governments. They were wrested from them by us. And once we surrender them, the battle to retrieve them is called a revolution. It is a battle that must range across continents and countries. It must not acknowledge national boundaries but, if it is to succeed, it has to begin here. In America. The only institution more powerful than the US government is American civil society.

The rest of us are subjects of slave nations. We are by no means powerless, but you have the power of proximity. You have access to the Imperial Palace and the Emperor's chambers. Empire's conquests are being carried out in your name, and you have the right to refuse. You could refuse to fight. Refuse to move those missiles from the warehouse to the dock. Refuse to wave that flag. Refuse the victory parade.

You have a rich tradition of resistance. You need only read Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* to remind yourself of this.

Hundreds of thousands of you have survived the relentless propaganda you have been subjected to, and are actively fighting your own government. In the ultra-patriotic climate that prevails in the United States, that's as brave as any Iraqi or Afghan or Palestinian fighting for his or her homeland.

If you join the battle, not in your hundreds of thousands, but in your millions, you will be greeted joyously by the rest of the world. And you will see how beautiful it is to be gentle instead of brutal, safe instead of scared. Befriended instead of isolated. Loved instead of hated.

I hate to disagree with your president. Yours is by no means a great nation. But you could be a great people.

History is giving you the chance.
Seize the time.

—Arundhati Roy
The Riverside Church, New York City, May 2003

Front page graphic: Stephen Goodfellow, “The Wedding Dance.”
This page: lino cut by Richard Mock

fifth estate

North America's Oldest
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Promoting rebellion since 1965

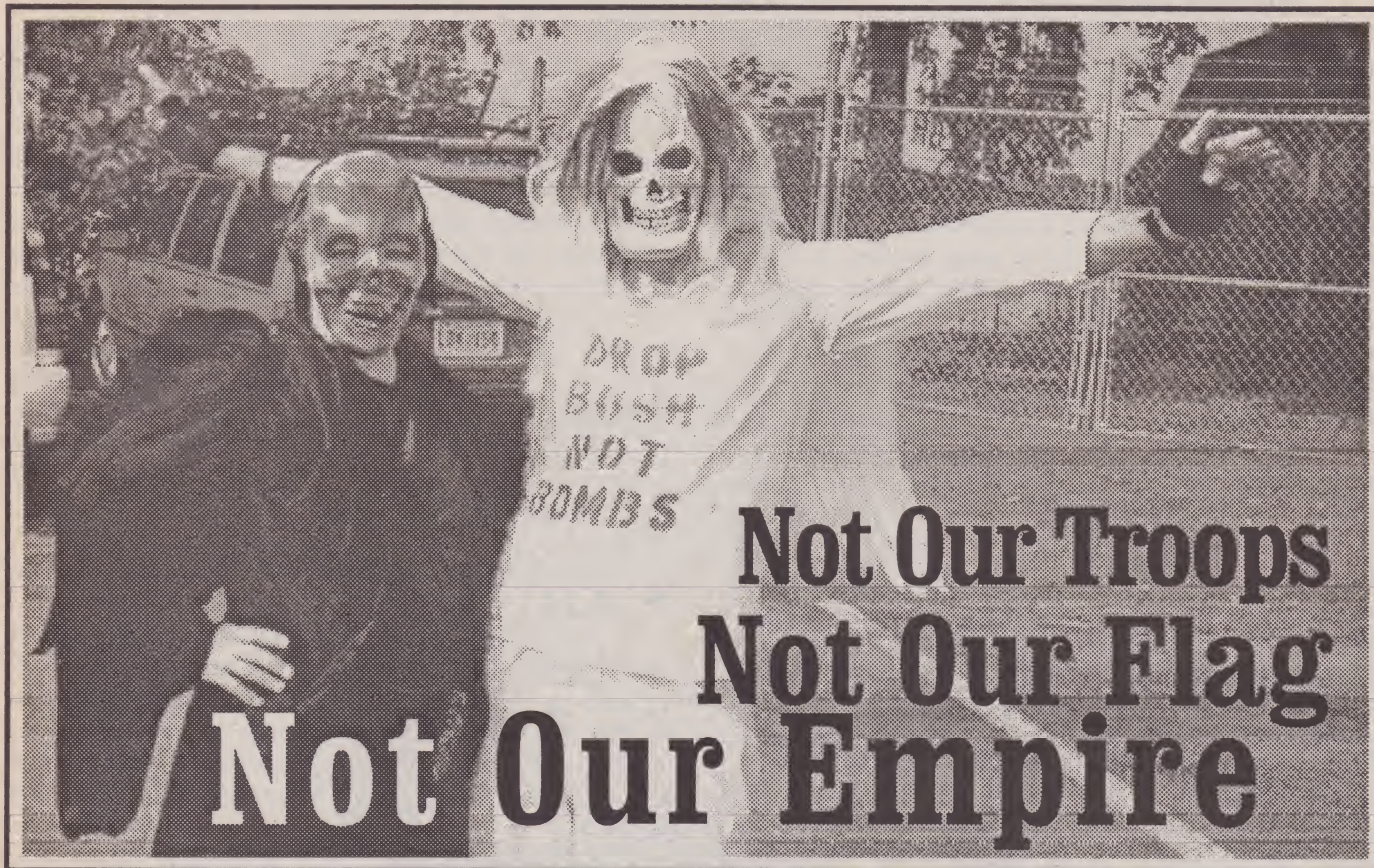
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They Create a Desert & Call it Peace: Welcome to the Occupation

With the horrible invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq threatening to expand to one or more of the other fifty-nine countries on the White House hit list, it's tempting to compare the imperialist lust of the Bush-Cheney regime to that of the Roman Empire in its earliest days.

The Roman foreign policy adopted after 150 BCE—called the “New Wisdom”—amounted to little more than the repeated, sustained use of brute military force to smash enemies and intimidate potential foes into pre-emptive surrender. By the time of the emperor Octavian Augustus, there was *Pax Romana*, the “Roman Peace,” a darkly humorous euphemism for maintaining stability, law and order through tyranny, savage militarism, and a strictly-policed State religion.

This state of affairs was probably best described by the Caledonian barbarian war chief Galgacus following Rome's military annihilation of his people and culture: “They create a

desert and then call it ‘Peace.’”

However, given the unending waves of demonstrations and armed attacks against US troops (and their hand-chosen quislings) in places like Kandahar and al-Nasariya, it seems that the pacification necessary for a declaration of *Pax Americana* is still a long way out of reach.

Besides Imperial Rome, we can also compare US attempts to build an empire in southwest Asia to the most sprawling ambitions of 350 years of autocratic Russian colonial domination in the central and eastern regions of that continent. The neoconservative commissars who ideologically direct the US Executive Branch Politburo would have excited Stalin and Khrushchev with their fantasies of a ruthlessly-concerted State capitalist plunder of Asia's resources and of unchallenged geopolitical hegemony.

Since 9/11, at least thirteen new US military bases have been built in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Krgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Georgia (War Secretary Rumsfeld vehemently denies that four more are being planned for Iraq), giving the US military an unprece-

International outrage against the US government has never been so popular, so widespread, and so well-organized.

dented access to the political landscape of south-central Asia and its largely (as yet) unexploited oil and natural gas reserves.

Before Bush, it was Brezhnev who had such an extensive first-strike military control over that region. However, a substantial difference exists between maintaining frontier outposts and airfields for the Pentagon and implementing imperialist political will. Globally, the US Department of Offense may be the world's largest landlord (with assets totaling 30 million acres, not counting Iraq). But, international outrage against the US government has never been so popular, so widespread, and so well-organized in Japan, Ireland, India, Brazil, Indonesia, Spain, South Korea, Italy, and many other places.

Recently, a US lieutenant-general in Iraq declared unequivocally that the invaders were the "absolute authority within Iraq"; former Iran-contra war criminal, death-squad apologist, and current US ambassador to the U.N. John Negroponte declared in a closed Security Council meeting in May that the US and Great Britain would be running Iraq as "occupying powers" for a year and probably much longer.

But even a child knows that saying something doesn't make it so; reports are beginning to leak out of Iraq that can no longer be painted with the bogeyman brush of "Saddam loyalists"—humanitarian catastrophes, cholera outbreaks, unexploded ordnance from US cluster bombs, and a dangerous lack of fresh water and electricity threaten life and limb. The war in Iraq is not over, nor will it be anytime soon, of this you can be certain.

A feature article in the *Fifth Estate* following the 1991 invasion of Iraq studied the flag-draped pep rallies and the millions of non-biodegradable, petroleum-based plastic yellow ribbons, and it asserted that "all of the rage and feelings of powerlessness, the miseries and humiliations of living in a society dominated by powerful and mostly anonymous forces such as the State and the market economy, are channeled into the partly choreographed, partly spontaneous fury against the external enemy."

In such a hothouse atmosphere, the threat existed for more wars, permanent wars, perpetual wars, "a string of these campaigns, of Vietnams, of Panamas, Nicaraguas, and Iraqs, a necklace of skulls hanging from the belt of the Warrior-Father of All Wars."

Twelve years later, the *Fifth Estate's* assessment of the excesses of rabid nationalism and "the permanent warfare State" has lost very little of its relevance: the "War Against Terrorism" is an endless war of the worlds. There are multiple, unilateral simultaneous wars being spawned by the likes of Richard Perle, Michael Ledeen, and the other noxious military-industrial celebrity spokesmodels and think-tank pimps at the New American Century/Washington Consensus medicine show. These imperial serial killers envision pro-US "constabulary operations" that will produce and perpetuate the blood-drenched lie of American exceptionalism, the repugnant notion

that there is something magically unique about the upper middle-class values that drive the US government and gives it moral and political superiority to all others as indispensable judge of paradigm for global peace and prosperity. (Failure of the international community to conform to the edicts of US national self-interest, therefore, requires the über-power to take punitive action in the name of God and the good of humankind.)

In 1991, the *Fifth Estate* cautioned that the "war for oil" was actually a "war for oil profits" that could be further interpreted as "a war for war, one which will continue to enshrine militarism as a key component in the US economy." This situation



—"Bush's Bloody Boots," Richard Mock, 2003

This is an endless war of the worlds spawned by think-tank pimps & imperial serial-killers

is obvious in Iraq today: after safeguarding the oilfields, murdering uncounted thousands of people, and pulverizing roads, affordable housing, hospitals, water treatment plants, and electrical grids, the CEOs of the Executive Branch awarded lucrative contracts to joint-stock carpetbagger corporations to restitch the urban fabric into commercial zones more immediately attractive to Wall Street speculators and the iron triangle of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization.

Always a tell-tale symptom of the most corrupt and vicious autocracies, crony capitalism is globalized by the shocktroops of the New World Order—on May 9, Bush proposed the creation of a US-Middle East "free trade area" by 2013. Think of the most bloated and shady "urban renewal" boondoggles of the 1970s and 1980s in any major US city, or the archipelagos of *maquiladora* slums in Mexico, or the "free" enterprise zone sweatshops and grey-market factory-brothels for petty-bour-

geois sex tourists in southeast Asia, and you'll get a hint of what this vision of the future holds for the "New Iraq."

In addition to being a war for oil profits, the Iraq invasion was also a war for the dollar-based fiscal control of the oil. Much of the motivation for the timing of the invasion was directly related to the macroeconomic machinations needed to protect the euro from replacing the US dollar as the currency standard for international petroleum transactions (a scenario not lost on antiwar street protesters in oil-rich countries such as Nigeria and Indonesia judging from the growing prevalence of "Euro yes! Dollar no!" slogans at rallies, according to an April report in *The Wall Street Journal*). Should OPEC move towards "petro-euros," the demand for US dollars would crash and cause US consumers to pay more for imported goods, adding an even higher level of inflation to the current wave of morbid capitalist spasms.

But with control of current and future Iraqi oil reserves (the world's second largest), new drilling in the Arctic, and help from their oil-executive stooges in Central Asia, South America, and Africa, the US could cobble together enough product to effectively bust the petro-euro menace in OPEC. It's no surprise, then, to see that the dollar is the coin of the realm in Occupied Iraq, not the euro used by most of the other members of the purported "Coalition of the Willing." (Long-time *Midnight Notes* Collectivist George Caffentzis adds important nuance to this interpretation in his essay "A Note on the Euro Explanation of the War," last seen on-line at the InterActivist Info Exchange on April 9.)

News from Nowhere

Empires exist through the extension of political will over others in a different place through military, economic, cultural, or administrative domination and exploitation. The resources, goods, and services extracted by imperialist rule flow along linked networks of communication and transportation; such networks are also used as a means of efficiently dispatching the technologies and tactics necessary for regulating and policing those living in an empire's remotest corners.

Mass media syndicates broadcast the myths of technological enrichment, justice, stability, democracy and peace, and they normalize and legitimize US authority in ways that Cruise missiles cannot. The potential points of anti-imperialist intervention, therefore, exist everywhere along these mass-media networks.

Ever since the US bombing of Afghanistan, there has been talk about new government bureaus being set up that would monitor, regulate, and

shape mass-mediated perceptions about what the Administration was up to. The Pentagon's "Office of Strategic Information" was meant to spread lies to bolster US war policies; the US Department of State has an "Office of Public Diplomacy" whose job it is to convince people in other countries that the US is not a corrupt, war-mongering rogue State driven by oil companies and investment banks; the White House recently opened an "Office of Global Communications" to provide spin directly from the West Wing.

But when it comes to uninforming, misinforming, and disinforming the public with ruling-class spam and patriotic porn, it's the capitalist private sector that is leading the way, and it's difficult to find a more odious perpetrator than the Clear Channel radio station conglomerate.

Clear Channel makes no effort to conceal the fact that it wants to be part of the Bush-Cheney Ministry of Information with its cookie-cutter formula of flag-waving, fundamentalism, and "freedom rock"; its kennel of talk-radio pitbulls sponsored and promoted pro-war "Rallies for America" and masterminded boycotts of recording artists who tried to express anti-war sentiments. (Not coincidentally, Clear Channel is looking for a favorable ruling by the Federal Communications Commission that will allow it to seize control of the Hispanic Broadcasting radio station network and the Univision television system, thereby giving them 70% control of Spanish-language advertising revenue in the US)

But the ruling junta in the US relies on other apparatuses, too, like Fox News, CNN, PBS, NPR, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* to produce, circulate, and distribute its symbolic imperial power.

One of the most notorious publicity spins of the war happened during the early days of the invasion when it seemed that the US military was blundering aimlessly around in the desert. Desperate for good news and patriotic poppycock, White House planners orchestrated the morale-building "rescue" of a perky blonde P.O.W. from a hospital. The dramatic (as in "drama class") events, captured with night-vision video cameras on tape carefully edited by Pentagon officials, showed an all-star cast of commandos from every military branch crashing through doors, beating up doctors, firing up hospital corridors with machine guns, and "freeing" the Army private. Endlessly replayed on the nightly news, the rescue footage swelled the breast of every proud, knee-jerk patriot who had ever seen *Die Hard*.

However, un-embedded reporters from Britain and Canada proved that the raid was as prefabricated as professional wrestling; the hospital had been abandoned by Iraqi troops days

before, and the quoted Iraqi doctors claiming that they had tried to turn the woman over to US troops earlier. Furthermore, her father and

Clear Channel makes no effort to conceal the fact that it wants to be part of the Bush-Cheney Ministry of Information with its cookie-cutter formula of flag-waving, fundamentalism, and "freedom rock."

her doctor in West Virginia said that she had none of the multiple bullet or knife wounds that the Pentagon insisted that she had received during her interrogation. The soldier herself cannot clear up the matters, as she is apparently suffering trauma-induced amnesia.

Related to this was a lucid op-ed piece for a major metropolitan newspaper written a few weeks back by the liberal historian of technology Wolfgang Schivelbusch. The thrust of his argument was that there was a critical "absence of the vanquished" in the official iconography of Bush's invasion of Iraq.

Without a symbolic show of the defeated leaders surrendering to the conquerors, he wrote, it becomes increasingly difficult to call the battle "won." Schivelbusch suggests that the "military asymmetry" had a lot to do with the absence of images of surrendering Ba'ath Party leadership—one needs to go back five centuries to the slaughter and enslavement of the Aztecs by the firearms and steel swords of Cortés's racist, Christian conquistador army to find a comparable mismatch:

"For Iraqi soldiers suffering for the second time in a dozen years the experience of being fish in a barrel, to disappear was the most natural and pragmatic thing to do." But in disappearing so completely, the Iraqis thwarted the propaganda engines of the US Without photo-ops of a formal surrender by Saddam Hussein, or millions of obediently grateful Iraqis showering US troops with rose-petal confetti, or even a single chemical, biological, or nuclear warhead, the White House is denied any kind of symbolically rich "surrender-trophy."

What Schivelbusch failed to suggest was that, in lieu of any useful "victory" images, the White House and Pentagon were forced into stage-managing clumsy hoaxes, such as the spuriously spontaneous demolition of a Saddam Hussein statue in Firdos Square, which was dutifully held up by corporate media as the iconography of regime change and democracy. Talk about a "captive audience"!

The de-pedestalizing of the statue was arranged for the day after US forces bombed the independent Arabic-language television news studios in Baghdad and happened in a central square across the street from the hotel where foreign journalists were staying. Closely cropped photographs of the square gave the impression of throngs, but the wide-angle view provided a much more telling account of this publicity stunt.

So, too, we are shown the side-show spectacle of May 1—during the time-slot traditionally considered by television executives to be the most-watched hour of the week, no less—when Bush landed a plane on the deck of a Navy ship. (It's since been reported that the ship had to be slowed down and turned around in order to prevent the California coastline to be seen in the live

TV coverage and thereby preserve the illusion that the smirking Commander-'n'-Thief was out in the middle of the Pacific.)

Rather than wait half an hour and board the ship in San Diego by gangplank, Karl Rove's fixers brewed up a \$1 million prime-time reality-TV gimmick that abstracted the flesh and blood of sailors on board into pretty bunting to decorate an election campaign stop under a banner reading "Mission Accomplished."

And it's not just the Iraq War, but the class war, too: when Bush spoke last week to a hand-picked audience of 7,000 of his *fedayeen* party hacks in Indianapolis about his pro-plutocrat tax breaks, media consultants asked those seated behind the podium to remove their neckties so as to appear more like Regular Americans on TV.

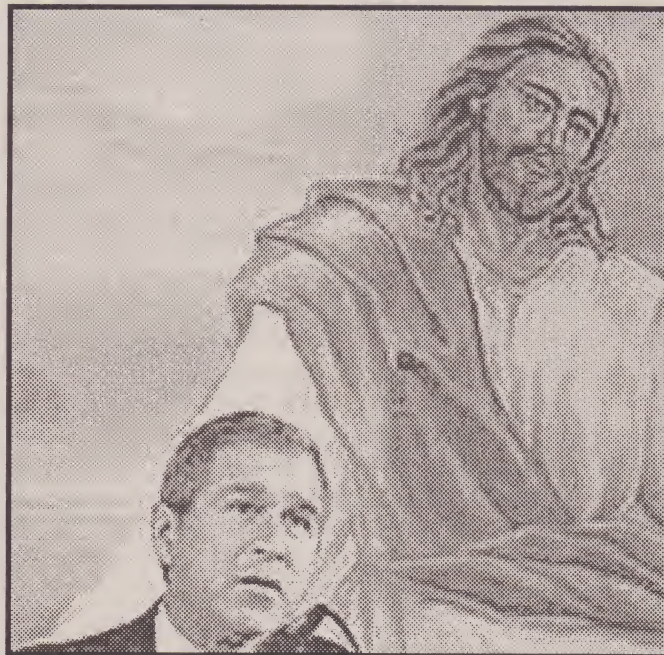
For these reasons, and many others, we need to disrupt and hijack the supply lines of the information economy. Back in April, Kurt Vonnegut lamented that television in the US had become a form of government. If this is true, then television is a government that we need to overthrow.

Bush's "Liberation" Theology

For us, perhaps the most grating aspect of the Iraqi invasion was the constant nattering about "liberating" Iraq by State functionaries, their mass-mediated apologists, and assorted yard signs and bumper stickers.

Let's be clear: liberty cannot be imposed by someone else, least of all the US military with their cluster bombs and depleted-uranium artillery. The agents and the objects of any emancipation project must be one in the same in order for true liberty to be achieved.

Of course, the choice of language was a deliberate attempt to invoke the "liberation" of France in 1944, but even French libertarian socialists during World War II regarded this concept with great suspicion.



Bush's thinking represents a fanatic moral certainty rife with a dangerous simplicity

"The effort of liberation only coincides in a partial and fortuitous manner with the struggle for liberty. A quite formal distinction between these two terms is imperative today when some are preparing to take advantage of this confusion to the detriment of liberty," the exiled poet André Breton wrote in Quebec following the D-Day invasion of Occupied France. "Liberty is not, like liberation, a struggle against sickness—it is *health*. Liberation might make us believe that health has been recovered, though it only signifies a remission of the illness, the disappearance of its most obvious and alarming symptom. Liberty itself eludes all happenstance."

We cannot be freed, in other words, unless we free ourselves. Thus, Imperial stormtroopers may have "liberated" Iraqis from some aspects of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship, but they also "liberated" them from their lives, their body parts, their homes, their family members, and their petroleum reserves. Liberation cannot substitute for liberty.

Given his regime's profound distaste in even the most rudimentary forms of liberal democracy, Bush's "liberation" rhetoric might be best understood in terms of a liberation theology that mixes a narrow view of social conditions with missionary Protestant praxis. Like so much of Bush's thinking, his notion of "liberating" Iraq is anchored in a pigheaded moral certainty rife with dangerous simplifications and childish reductions.

It is a worldview shared by Islamic fanatics who plow planes into skyscrapers, of orthodox Jewish settlers who cheer armored bulldozers that bury people alive, and of televangelists like Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson who profit from propagating sadistic *Left Behind* fantasies of apocalyptic miserabilism.

One of most trusted religious advisors to the Bush Palace is Franklin Graham, who led a series of rather disturbing anointing prayers at Bush's coronation ball in 2000 and has since been a frequent guest at the White House's all-but-compulsory prayer meetings. Franklin Graham's role as royal *éminence grise* marks the beginning of a second generation of the Graham Crusade industry's involvement with White House cliques—Franklin's TV preaching daddy, Billy, has been skulking around the White House for decades and can be heard encouraging nuclear war and spouting racist slurs on Nixon's Watergate Tapes.

Among his other crimes against humanity, Billy is supposedly responsible for George W.'s born-again victory over whiskey, cocaine, and sinful fornication through indoctrination into the wrathful religious cult of unreconstructed Christian segregationists known as the Southern Baptists. Any analysis of the string of Bush's intolerant and bizarre comments on non-Christian religions, abortion, education, and HIV-AIDS can be mapped onto the patriarchal authoritarianism of this ugly, fear-mongering sect.

On the Friday before Easter prior to the invasion of Iraq,

Franklin Graham—who, incidentally, proudly claims to have chopped down a tree in his backyard in North Carolina with an automatic rifle—conducted a Christian religious service at the Pentagon in the room usually used by the handful of Muslims who work there for weekly prayer.

Such symbolic staging could not have been lost on Graham, who touched off a small controversy a year or so back when he described Islam as "a very evil and wicked religion" (not to be confused with the other evil, wicked, violently jealous desert monotheisms of Judaism and Christianity).

But with the beginning of Operation: Iraqi Freedom™, Graham, in that selflessly forgiving Christian way, has devoted himself and his Samaritan's Purse charity organization to bringing humanitarian relief services to those victimized by the US war machine. Water, food, clothing, and shelter will be provided regardless of one's religious affiliation, Graham

has said, but he refuses to ignore the "spiritual needs" of those defeated heathens that his crusading charity serves. One wonders if there will be a place for the Grahams' far-flung media empire on the new US-run State television network in Iraq.

This spring, the US government launched an Arabic language satellite TV news station for mostly Muslim Iraq. It is being produced in a studio run by fundamentalist Christians who are rabidly pro-Israel. Grace Digital Media is controlled by a fundamentalist Christian millionaire, Cheryl Reagan, who last year wrested control of Federal News Service, a transcription news service, from its former owner, Cortes Randell. Randell says he met Reagan at a prayer meeting.

Perhaps this is part of bringing "democracy" to Iraq, like when in late April, US troops opened fire on a group of peaceful Iraqi demonstrators near Baghdad, killing at least 13 people and wounding 75 others.

Those who study vicious religious ideologies point to examples like Graham's power in US political circles and plans for the proposed evangelical invasion of the "Towards Freedom" channel in Iraq and argue that the Empire's policies in the Middle East go well beyond maintaining the Israeli State as a *de facto* US aircraft carrier in the region. They say that there's something else going on here that is far more creepy and supernatural, some sort of faith-based foreign policy involving a State religion being promulgated by the White House. This ideology has roots easily traceable to the influences of the zealous pre-millennial dispensationalism of the Christian Dominion movement.

Generally speaking, Dominionites are hateful Christian extremists who brand themselves with the logo of the US flag while howling for their warrior God to smite the Muslim infidels. Followers of this sect pray daily for a "Shield of Protection" to cover the US, its military, and the State of Israel, as their eschatology dictates that the survival of the latter is cru-

Whether Bush's State religion is self-serving or genuine makes no difference to those opposed to domination by God and the State

cial for the fulfillment of some biblical drivel about the Rapture.

According to these Christian fundamentalists, Jerusalem is the staging ground for Christ's Second Coming, and therefore, it must never be allowed to fall into the hands of the Islamic devils. The Temple Mount mosque must be destroyed, and a new synagogue must be built there, a "Third Temple" that will set into motion the celestial mechanisms needed to usher Christ back into this world.

This catastrophic return will be an orgy of destruction and pain (which apparently involves the butchering of all but 144,000 Jews who, needless to say, quickly convert to Christianity) that finds the Righteous saved and the rest of us damned for eternity.

The degree to which Bush sincerely believes in this flavor of dogshit is immaterial for those of us dedicated to fighting for liberty. Whether Bush's State religion is a hostile and self-serving application of Southern Baptism or a genuine devotion to its guiding principles makes no difference to those opposed to domination by God and the State, since the effects are going to be the same. During the height of the anti-war struggle, there were some anarchists who formed temporary alliances with Christian and Muslim pacifists in the interests of the Greater Good.

The activities of Bush and his Republican Guard remind us that those governed by religious ideas probably want to govern through religious ideas.

"The very nature and essence of every religious system is the impoverishment, enslavement, and annihilation of humanity for the benefit of divinity," Bakunin wrote back in the day.

"Legislators inspired by God Himself, recognized as the representatives of divinity on earth, chosen by God Himself to direct humanity on the path to salvation, necessarily exercise absolute power. Slaves of God, men [*sic*] must also be slaves of the Church and the State, in so far as the State is consecrated by the Church."

Little wonder, then, that "God, ever just, ever good, hands over the earth to the government of Napoleon the Thirds, of the Wilhelm the Firsts, of the Ferdinands of Austria, and of the Alexanders of all the Russias," he concluded sarcastically. This is the same God, no doubt, that is also responsible for the Bush the Seconds, the Ariel Sharons, and the Houses of Saud that we are all cursed with today.

This is Not Our Country

Reports of hand-wringing, disillusionment, and resignation by everyone in the anti-war milieu for "failing" to prevent the invasion are greatly exaggerated. Anti-authoritarians will continue to confront the advancing imperialist project and its concomitant exponential increase in State and police powers. Among anarchists, autonomists, and libertarian socialists, the struggle continues as it always has since before Iraq and Afghanistan.

We remain thoroughly disgusted by nationalism, genderism, religion, racism, globalization, and militarism, and we resolute-

ly will continue resisting the State and Capital by any and all means necessary.

In an article for the *Fifth Estate* following the 1991 war (and reprinted in his 1998 *Against the Megamachine* collection), David Watson agitated for revolutionary defeatism and sedition, urging readers to spread the word that "these are not our troops, this is not our flag, this is not our country" and to incite mutiny "if not against this war, which may end too quickly, then against the next."

For 2003, we at the *Fifth Estate* can think of no reason to change Watson's appeal. The tools of imperialism are legion, and so too are the means for combating it—there is no facet of life and public affairs that can be uncontested space.

In the service of this goal, some readers will tactically unite with other global justice/ pro-democracy mass movements and instigate a broadening of critique, while others will bond in affinity groups or individually hone commitments to absolute liberty and autonomy. But whatever form your struggles must take, please consider internationalizing these efforts. There are anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist organizations, movements, and individuals active outside of the Empire's center whose help and guidance we need now more than ever before.

Anti-imperialism will be innumerable constellations of creative, insurgent, pre-emptive actions, and tireless demonstrations of insurrectionary resistance. For the New Empire, let us become the New Barbarians.

"We must support the troops in only one way—by encouraging them to revolt against the conditions of their slavery."

Some of the *Fifth Estate's* best essays from the 1980s and 1990s—including two essays on Iraq still relevant today—can be found in David Watson's

Against the Megamachine: Essays on Empire & Its Enemies.

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The demonstrations against the war, though they were probably the biggest and most widespread demonstrations in the history of the world, were ignored by our so-called representatives. That's right: neither our votes, nor our letters to our congressmen, nor the opinions of our allies, nor our efforts to show our numbers in the streets have had any influence on their decisions.

The ones in power today do not care about us; that is to say, they don't care about democracy, except insofar as it can help them maintain their power. That's why they still buy television commercials for themselves, as if their political and military campaigns were soda pop. With elections sabotaged, polite protests ignored, and civil liberties eroding, democracy is our responsibility now. Democracy, if it is to exist anywhere, will take place outside the Pentagon, outside the House of Representatives, in the lives of ordinary people.

Now is the time for us to meet in our communities, face to face, to decide what we want and figure out how to make it happen. Under an administration that refuses to listen to the voice of the people, the only approach that could work to make our voices heard is the one folks applied in San Francisco and New York when the war started: they shut those cities down.

We are the ones who make this country run. If we are to act on our consciences, if we are to take responsibility for our role in world affairs and the effect that this has on our lives, we need to be ready to say no with our actions as well as our mouths. What we need is an opposition that is not liberal, but radical.

Not liberal. Radical.

So this is the deal, Middle America, wherever you are: you can go on with your work-consume-keep-silent routine hoping it'll all blow over, but when the next war comes, your streets are going to be defaced with graffiti, your relatives are going to be under surveillance, your commute is going to be interrupted by blockades, your children are going to be calling you from jail, your foreign neighbors are going to disappear, and your corporate news programs are going to make less and less sense.

Business as usual is going to be impossible—and not just because of pesky protesters. Sooner or later, you're going to have to take a stand.

If you don't, you'll know who to

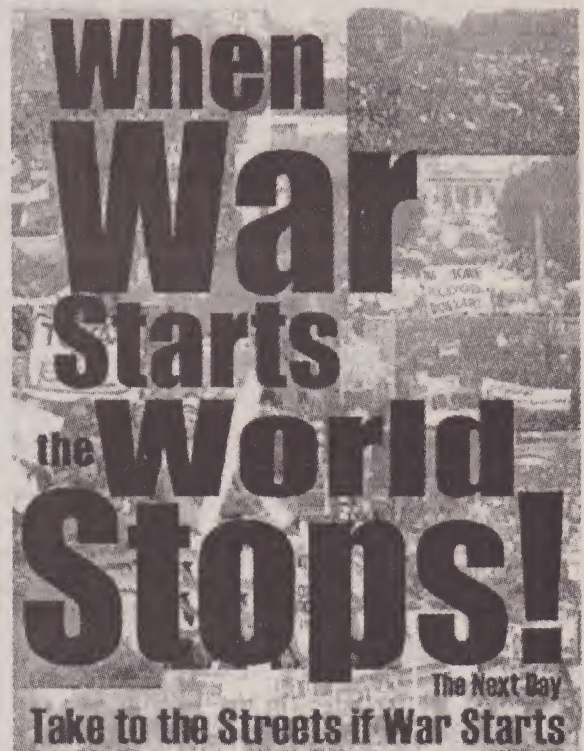
Join us in the streets before it's too late . . .

blame when the next generation of refugees comes of age to carry out a new wave of terrorist attacks against us. In the long run, you can't fight violence with violence unless you're willing to kill everyone—and make no mistake about it, in this country today all it takes to support that approach is to pay taxes and keep shopping.

To quote one more wise fellow: "It is the duty of every patriot to protect his country from its government." We're not against the citizens of this country, nor the people serving in the armed forces, nor democracy!

We love our country and our compatriots, and prize freedom above all things—but freedom, if it is to be more than mere rhetoric, is something we have to make together, not receive from on high. Please join us, in neighborly conversation, in our communities and in the streets, before it's too late.

—Red-White-and-Brain, April 2003
www.crimethinc.net



On the first day of Spring, every major city in the world was either slowed down or shut down as millions blocked, biked, built barricades, and generally became the biggest, baddest, boldest peace movement ever. But we have much more yet to do . . .

Depose Dr. Death & Support Our Protesters

NASHVILLE—A *Fifth Estate* collective member was among a handful of protesters who took their message to Sen. Bill "Dr. Death" Frist at his Nashville Field Office on March 21. Wearing medical scrubs emblazoned with the message "Harm None" and armed with a leaflet denouncing the draconian doctor for his brazen pro-war position, our writer attempted to enter the office building where Frist has his hometown post.

However, a swarm of Nashville cops greeted the activists at the office building door and ordered them to disperse. Unwavered, our Dr. Love walked into the foyer of the Frist command center where he was swiftly swept away by the authorities. Charged with criminal trespassing, he has a trial date soon. For an update or to offer support, please contact the FE.

In early April, the Oakland Police Department (OPD) fired on non-violent anti-war demonstrators without cause or provocation.

No police were hurt. The protestors conducted themselves in an organized, dignified, and calm manner at all times, even while being fired upon.

Many demonstrators were shot and wounded. Almost all were shot in the back while retreating from advancing police. A concussion grenade exploded inches from protesters. Not only did OPD fire directly on non-violent protestors, they appeared to deliberately turn to fire on longshore workers who were clearly standing to the side and not involved in the protest.

Early this year, the NYPD gained greater power to investigate political activity, citing terrorism concerns.

The department convinced a federal judge that its security needs in these times of unprecedented danger outweigh most of the rights protections in a key 1985 ban on police probes of lawful activism.

But as civil liberties advocates feared, the most notable police actions since have had seemingly little to do with terrorism prevention and everything to do with repressing protest. Tensions between activists and police have swelled with each demonstration. The skirmishes are shaping up to be a struggle over the very right to protest in the streets of New York. The battle unfolds as potentially the biggest showdown of all, the 2004 Republican National Convention, looms.

People planning large-scale convergence-type protests should be prepared for police attacks before the events begin.

In May, at least two dozen people were arrested in coordinated "pre-emptive raids" on several St. Louis area homes, apparently to prevent activists attendance at a national Biodevastation conference and demonstration against the World Agricultural Forum.

Police stole materials from places they attacked, including at least one computer. Sarah Bantz—a speaker at the BioDevastation conference—was arrested for having a container of Vitamin C capsules, which police are claiming to be an illegal drug.

In the United States, a tenant can be evicted for protesting against the government.

That's what a union local based in Albuquerque, New Mexico found out last month when they were evicted from their offices on San Mateo Boulevard.

According to the complaint filed by their landlord, Carroll Ventures Inc., the union "breached the terms of its lease by holding an anti-war demonstration. . . ." The union local definitely held an anti-war demonstration, but it was at a nearby intersection and not at its offices.

In April, ten inmates of the Guantanamo Bay prison were handed over to Afghan authorities. Human-rights groups are still worried about those left behind in Cuba.

They weren't senior Taliban or al-Qaeda members, but the US military deemed them important enough to be transferred from Afghanistan to an ultra-high-security prison on the other side of the earth. Then, after nearly a year of interrogations at the US military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, they were set free without compensation or even an apology.

Human-rights advocates have criticized US President George W. Bush's administration for holding prisoners at the naval base indefinitely and without charging them with any crime, putting them on trial or giving them access to lawyers.

Human-rights groups called for the US to release teenagers from the prison after it was revealed that several boys between ages 13 and 16 were being held there.

Some teachers in Oakland, California rallied behind two students who were interrogated by the Secret Service.

For years the classroom has been the setting for the free expression of ideas, but this past spring, anti-Bush statements led to two students being taken out of class and grilled by the United States Secret Service.

At Oakland High, the discussion was about the war in Iraq. While the exact wording of what the students said is up for debate, the teacher didn't consider it mere criticism, but a direct threat, and she called the Secret Service.

Teacher Larry Felson says, "What we're concerned about is academic freedom and that students have the right to

Tales from the Police State

free expression in the classroom." Even worse is the fact that the students were grilled by federal agents without legal counsel or their parents present.

A New Mexico State University professor was arrested but not charged during a protest on campus Saturday. Police responded to complaints made by sorority sisters who did not want the protest near their home.

Professor David Boje contends he "was arrested, handcuffed, leg-shackled, and confined at New Mexico State University Police Headquarters for over an hour without charge, without Miranda rights being read, and without call to an attorney."

In New York, the Columbia University Spectator charged anti-war professors with being too dogmatic at a teach-in that gained national attention. The controversy was sparked by Nicholas DeGenova, a professor of anthropology.

"Peace is not patriotic," DeGenova began. "Peace is subversive, because peace anticipates a very different world than the one in which we live—a world where the US would have no place. US flags are the emblem of the invading war machine in Iraq today. They are the emblem of the occupying power. The only true heroes are those who find ways that help defeat the US military."

Between DeGenova's condemnation of patriotism and his call for "fragging," his speech provoked many of the professors who spoke later in the night to disagree with DeGenova.

It is DeGenova who then received death threats and vicious verbal attacks from right-wing radio hosts, US congress-people, and the president of the university.

—Compiled by Tequila Mockingbird

Strange Bedfellows?

An anti-fascist talk for Bakunin's birthday

by Michael Staudenmaier

—From a talk given at the Fourth Annual Montreal Anarchist Bookfair, May 18, 2003

Think back to the Great Depression and World War II and envision the odd alliances that developed around the world in the face of capitalist crisis and rising fascism: the Hitler-Stalin pact, for instance, or syndicalist support for Mussolini. Or, imagine militant anti-fascists in the underground resistance (often dominated by Stalinists) building ties with US and British military forces. Radicals in North America split between those who encouraged enrollment in the fight against fascism and those who did time in prison for refusing the draft. Think of the strange permutations of Peronism in Argentina, the “green” and “left” wings of the Nazi Party, the failure of the European left in the face of Italian occupation in Ethiopia, or the twists and turns of East Asian resistance to Japanese occupation.

Some of these alliances are now scoffed at by anarchists and revolutionary anti-fascists. But others are not so easily dismissed. Would you have enlisted in the Army against the Nazis? Would you have participated in the French or Dutch or Italian resistance, knowing that most support was coming from either the Soviet Union or the United States? Would you have encouraged draft resistance in the US or Canada during World War II? I don't have clear answers to these questions; in fact, I think anyone who answers too quickly probably hasn't thought them through.

As hard as it is to answer such questions though, we'd better start trying because chances are we'll soon be facing similar decisions ourselves, in a new and different context. The world is changing more dramatically right now than it has at any time in the past half-century, and it seems the old contrast between “Socialism or Barbarism” is as plausible now as it has ever been before. A careful assessment of global transformations—from Seattle, Quebec, and Genoa to September 11, Iraq, Syria, Philippines, and Colombia—is essential to efforts to create a liberatory movement, a revolutionary moment, and a free society. Much of the discussion that follows is indebted to the book

Confronting Fascism: Discussion Documents for a Militant Movement, by Don Hamerquist, J. Sakai, et al. which came out of a series of discussions among anarchists and revolutionary anti-fascists around North America over the past several years.

Fascism is built on a dialectic of backwards and forwards, of nostalgia and progress. These two are always in tension, but the tension is productive in a way that makes fascism far more dangerous than most of us are willing to admit. To see only the regressive aspects can make us blind to the truly modern appeal of fascism, while seeing only the progressive elements can make fascism seem indistinguishable from capitalism and the state as we know them today.

While white supremacy has historically been the hallmark of major fascist groupings, this has not always been the case. And in any event racial purity has almost always been a secondary element in fascist ideology, conditioned by and dependent upon hypertrophied patriarchy. Social and cultural totalitarianism, beginning with total male supremacy in the home and in society, is the essential component unifying the various competing strands of fascism around the world.

A careful assessment of global transformations—from Seattle, Quebec, and Genoa to September 11, Iraq, and Syria...is essential to efforts to create a liberatory movement, a revolutionary moment, and a free society.

But over this ideological core, fascists have adopted a bewildering range of political positions, some of which are frighteningly close to popular left stances on many issues. We have

already seen fascist infiltration in the anti-capitalist/globalization movement, as well as widespread (but by no means universal) support among fascists for the September 11 attacks. Because we as anti-fascists tend to treat all fascists as brainless thugs, these maneuvers can seem confusing or downright incomprehensible. Yet, for this very reason, it is imperative that we figure out what is going on here.

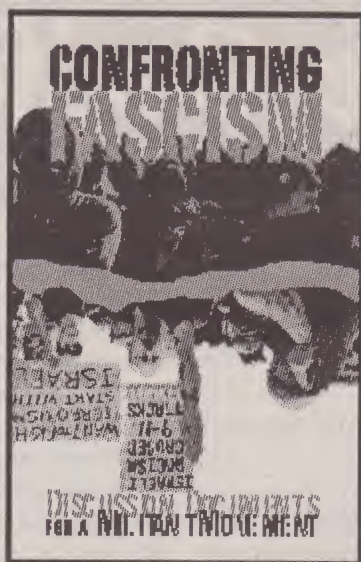
Perhaps the most easily understood example of this leftward tilting fascism is the support of groups like the National Alliance (NA) for Palestinian liberation. (See, for instance, the cover of *Confronting Fascism*, which features seig-heiling skinheads in Washington, DC last spring denouncing Israel and supporting Palestine). Certainly, much of this “support” is opportunistic posturing and the anti-semitic equivalent of popular front strategy, but just as certainly, there is at least a core of ideologues who sincerely support the sort of racial separatism advocated at the NA's DC rallies last year.

More significantly, there is a good possibility that the NA's position will resonate, not only with overt white supremacists, but also with white “liberals” who have been rightly appalled

by Israeli treatment of the Palestinians, and even by elements of the Palestinian movement (whether Islamist or otherwise) that have incorporated some notion of racial, ethnic, or religious purity into their analysis. In each case, the majority of these groupings have no analysis, much less any practice, that would lead them to challenge the patriarchal moorings of such an alliance.

But can we generalize from the experience of a few hundred anti-semites? It is possible that the NA rallies represent nothing more than the old-school of North American fascism, but even then people like J. Sakai, co-author of *Confronting Fascism* and a long-time revolutionary organizer and writer, will argue that the old school is more sophisticated than most anti-fascists give it credit for. Or, we might consider Billy Roper (organizer of the DC rallies, but subsequently forced out of the NA) and his cohorts to be the bridge between an old fascism and a new one, built on progress and nostalgia in the 21st century, not the 20th.

Don Hamerquist, co-author of *Confronting Fascism* and a seasoned anti-fascist militant, argues (especially on p. 43-45) that the true danger of a new fascism lies in its adaptability to the reality of capitalist crisis in the new millennium. Fascism, like the left, is a product of capitalism and its long history of



development and crisis. In the coming years, the development of global capital may create a crisis for white supremacy, if it is seen as a hindrance to profit rather than as its prerequisite. For an early example, consider the overwhelming support of Fortune 500 companies for affirmative action policies at elite universities in the US (especially in the University of Michigan cases currently before the US Supreme Court). This transition is likely to happen even more quickly if the current economic downturn continues to expand globally. Fascism's progressivist moment welcomes both the development and the crisis (while much of the left refuses even to acknowledge the possibility that white supremacy could be discarded by capitalism), but its nostalgic moment longs to preserve the privileges of white skin.

One increasingly likely outcome here is a defense of purity and separatism, rather than supremacy as such. If you can't beat 'em, join 'em, and replace Hitler with Bin Laden or Che on your mastheads and websites. As these mutations mature, it will be worth reconsidering whether "fascism" is an appropriate categorization, but the term retains value at this point, if only for reasons of historical context and framing. Regardless, the kernel of

Montreal Bookfair Mixes Theory with Practice

MONTREAL—In the narrow street outside the building where the fourth annual Montreal Anarchist Bookfair had taken place, May 17-18, people milled around—chatting about the workshops and thanking us for a well organized weekend. The members of the collective were wired, tired, and relieved following the weeks of activity.

The Montreal May Day march inspired the Anarchist contingent to continue marching daily—sometimes twice a day—until the bookfair weekend.

Events of the Fair began on the evening of Friday, May 16 with a panel entitled "Anarchists and the War." The group included representatives from the Anarchist Federation of France, as well as participants from the US and Quebec. On Saturday, over 1,500 people browsed, discussed, and bought from the more than 75 vendors who represented small and large presses and distributors from Europe, Latin America, the US, and Canada.

What distinguishes the Montreal bookfair from others in North America is the connection between French speaking Quebecois anarchists with those in Europe, and this is reflected in the number of European presses. As well, there are strong links with Mexican anarchist, who also had a table. There were exhibits about the Paris Commune and lesser-known aspects of the Zapatista movement. In addition to workshops, events included theatre in the park, films, and a walking tour conducted by the CLAC (Convergence des luttes anti-capitalistes) through the poor neighborhood where the bookfair was held.

On Sunday, there were 15 workshops—a mix of theoretical and practical, given in English, French, or Spanish. The ongoing, informal small-group translation into English or French permitted people to meet and discuss important questions with those who don't speak the same language.

Highlights leading up to the bookfair included a talk by Martha Ackelsberg, author of *Free Women of Spain*, a 4 day film festival, a poetry reading, a book launch of the French translation of Tolstoy's political writings, a discussion about technology, nature, and domination, another concerning anarchy at work, and a benefit show.

Anyone wanting more information should call 514-844-3207 or write to salon2003@ziplip.com

—Sandy Feldheim

truth in what liberals in the US have opportunistically called "left-right convergence" will likely confront us more and more frequently in the coming years.

Most anarchists and other leftists flatly refuse to consider this as a real possibility. But for those of us who decline to underestimate our enemy, a different question presents itself: If fascism can become revolutionary, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, ecologically-minded, and so on (and does anyone deny any one of these possibilities, considered individually?), is it really so bad? For the Stalinists out there, perhaps not; think of the National Bolshevik Tendency and its "Red-Brown Alliance". But for anarchism, revolutionary feminism, radical queers, and other liberatory elements inside anti-fascism, the answer remains, "hell yes!" and the reason, while not necessarily obvious, is relatively simple.

Our vision of a free society and of the movement that can help bring it into being involves social (including sexual) experimentation, clashes and mixtures of cultures and traditions, creative efforts and music and art of various origin, reproductive freedom, a diversity of backgrounds and interests, cooperation amongst strangers, freedom of movement, and what gets called globalization from below. In short, a revolutionary and liberatory culture is at the heart of our best efforts. We aren't necessarily hedonists (though some of us are), but we are most certainly not puritans. For this basic reason, no permutation of fascism can possibly become our ally in the revolutionary moment we all hope and struggle for.

At the same time, it is equally important to recognize the corresponding issues that make capitalism (which remains, at this point, the most likely alternative to fascism) "really so bad." In this context, the current situation in the US in particular should not be misunderstood. There has been much debate over the true cause and basis of the Iraq war and the war on terror, none of it conclusive. But it is important to remember that the interests of capitalism, and the potentially independent interests of various capitalist states, are opposed not only to our interests but also to those of the fascists. In the States, domestic fascists have suffered far more severe state repression in recent years than any section of the non-Arab left.

In a parallel vein, the arena of nationalism and nations presents similar confusions, partly because nationalisms vary widely in their self-perception. Some are built around rigid biological notions of the nation as a heritable essence, which can be diluted or perverted if not defended properly. This is very similar to the hypertrophied patriarchy identified earlier as the essence of fascism, and Nazi Germany is obviously the pinnacle of such thinking, but examples abound across the world, including the third world. Other nationalisms are deliberately articulated around cultural elements, like music, food, or language, that can be learned or adopted by anyone, regardless of bloodline. These groupings may still contain within themselves a latent fascist potentiality (despite official pronouncements to the contrary), especially those that emphasize compulsory roles for women and children in defending the purity of the nation's

cultural heritage. In many cases the most that can be hoped for is the recognition of this possibility, and the prioritization of struggle against it. But some number of nationalisms, perhaps few, far between, and depressingly small in size, will stand with revolutionary anti-fascism and incorporate it into their organizing.

And that's the key, in the end: to be successful anti-fascists means being revolutionary anti-fascists, and to be revolutionary anti-fascists means being steadfast advocates and practitioners of freedom, creativity, cooperation, resistance, and diversity. There is no guarantee of a free society, but there are many requirements for its creation. A radically liberatory culture is one such necessity.

In Chicago, to give a concrete example, Anti-Racist Action has developed a solid working relationship with a relatively small Palestine solidarity organization called Al-Awda Chicago, the local affiliate of the (US) national organization for the right of return for Palestinians. ARA helped coordinate security at a major right of return demonstration in Chicago last fall, sponsored by Al-Awda Chicago and attended by several thousand people. Members of Al-Awda Chicago have helped organize for several ARA efforts as well, including the protests against the NA rally in DC last August. Several members of Al-Awda Chicago identify as fervent anti-nationalists, and the organization is committed to the creation of a free, democratic, and pluralistic Palestine, a vision that puts its membership squarely at odds with even the most anti-imperialist fascists, be they members of the National Alliance or of Hamas.

ARA has also attempted (with mixed success) to build ties in the Mexican and Polish communities, especially in youth and subcultural scenes like punk and hip-hop (yes, there is Polish hip-hop). Most ARA leaflets are tri-lingual, including English, Polish, and Spanish versions. ARA has also attempted to maintain connections with various groupings of radical queers, activist artists, and politicized sports fans. Its reputation for getting in fights with nazis notwithstanding, the bulk of ARA's work in Chicago the past few years has been cultural. This is a good thing (though there's nothing wrong with bashing the fash either). Of course, the question remains, how successful can this anti-fascist cultural work be in fighting forms of fascism that thrive in very different classes and subcultures than those the anti-fascists live in?

One hundred eighty nine years ago today, Mikhail Bakunin was born. Late in his life he offered this metaphorical explanation of what we as anarchists oppose: "The State, as I have said, is basically a vast cemetery, wherein every manifestation of individual and local life, every interest of those parties who together constitute society, is sacrificed, dies, and is buried" ("Open Letter to Swiss Comrades of the International" (1869) in *The Basic Bakunin*, ed. Robert M. Cutler. The question of the best way to oppose and overthrow that cemetery, in either its capitalist or fascist versions, is one that should occupy the attentions of anarchists and revolutionary anti-fascists everywhere.

Resistance Begins at Home

By MaxZine Weinstein

While working as a human rights activist in Guatemala, I learned some of the most profound lessons of resistance. There, I experienced some of the greatest despair imaginable and some of the greatest hope.

In the 1950's, reformers and an indigenous majority—who wanted to end hunger and virtual enslavement on fruit and coffee plantations—challenged generations of neo-colonial rule. Their pleas for freedom were met by a CIA/US corporate directed coup, a series of military dictators and a scorched earth campaign against Mayan villages. Death squads committed a notorious crime against Guatemalans, the torture and murder of desaparecidos thought to be subversives — tens of thousands have been disappeared and never heard from again. The targets: union organizers, students, human rights supporters, and anyone in the wrong place at the wrong time. When people spoke out against these horrors they, too, would disappear, ensuring a frightened public would not organize effective resistance.

In the 1980's emerged the Mutual Support Group of the Relatives of the Disappeared (the group called GAM). This group persists to this day despite the brutal killings of many of their leaders and constant threats to members. I went to Guatemala working with Peace Brigades International, a group that offers support and non-violent direct action in areas affect-

ed by violence and war. Some of the GAM activists resented our presence in their lives, but also assured us it would be too dangerous to continue without us.

I went to Santiago Atitlan, a highland village where North American and European tourists arrived by the boatload to buy Mayan crafts and "experience" Indian culture during the day, oblivious to the reality that when they left on their ferries

returning them to their hotels across Lake Atitlan, soldiers went door-to-door to terrorize the population. The government depended on tourist dollars and made efforts to hide their acts of genocide from gringo eyes. My role was to maintain a visible presence as a white person with a camera as part of an effort to deter violence to the brothers I was escorting. I was never quite sure what I would do if someone pointed a machine gun at my camera.

My first meeting there was at the Catholic church on the main square with nuns who still mourned the Oklahoma priest who had been murdered by a death squad years earlier. He had been accused of supporting land reform. They showed me the dried blood on the walls of his chambers, that they had never washed off. I left the church feeling stunned and passed by a funeral march for a slain Tzutujil Mayan. I sat on a wall of some ruins to witness the procession go by and when I looked through a window I saw police beating up someone. When they saw me they looked at me menacingly; I decided to leave before becoming their next victim.



She recognized my despair and asked me not to let her loss stop me from going home and enjoying life in a way that she never could.

managed to carry on against odds and if she had ideas of what I could do in the US to help her struggle. She recognized my despair and asked me not to let her loss stop me from going home and enjoying life in a way that she never could. It was a Guatemalan version of the (misquoted) saying attributed to Emma Goldman: "If you can't dance, I won't be a part of your revolution."

As time passed I felt increasingly powerless: I knew I might be part of some social change, but it felt abstract and I longed to come home and try to effect US policy. I asked one Guatemalan woman—who had many family members killed by death squads — to explain how she

Back in the United States, I took the advice of my Guatemalan friend and plunged into the radical faerie milieu, which appeals to me as an anti-authoritarian movement of activists, gardeners, ecologists, and artists who reject the gay mainstream tendency to assimilate into consumer-crazed American culture. I particularly enjoy when the faeries play the subversive role of clowns.

Discovering the faeries provided a pivotal experience in my awakening as a young, activist queer. Further, radical faerie activists have brought a sense of humor to the streets when we have joined protest movements. I first saw this in the Act Up heydays of the late 1980's when faeries in freaky drag served up irreverence during a tense time when public officials were tossing around the words "gay" and "quarantine" together. Friends and I have organized numerous acts of playful resistance, from a Miss Meltdown pageant at a nuclear power protest to the "Faeries for Pot, Choice and the Environment" at the Ann Arbor Hash Bash.

Nine years ago, I moved to the newly established radical faerie community of IDA in Tennessee (founded by men, the community has consciously changed to a gender-free-for-all which welcomes women and trannies as residents). We live eleven miles from Short Mountain Sanctuary, a hub of faerie activity that draws hundreds of people to their gatherings. I was initially attracted by the (somewhat) healthy back-to-the-land lifestyle.

Faerieland is one of the most nurturing environments I have ever experienced, including: assistance offered to people when they are ill; encouragement people receive to try things they have been told they are not good at; sharing of resources. Most of all I have maintained my home here because I love how easy it is to be whoever I am, knowing that my fellow communards will support me through whatever weirdness I delve into. Year after year I am grateful to have so many caring friends who amaze me with their kindness and creativity.

While living in this culture is easy for me, it is definitely not easy for everyone. The vast majority of the faerie community consists of white folks and issues prevalent in the larger society that we come from are reflected in our community. Most of us who moved to the local faerie neighborhood are outsiders who came here with little experience of the race and class dynamics prevalent in the South.

One of the first things I noticed at my first radical faerie gathering was how few people of color attended. In my city life, I was accustomed to a diverse population. I asked people why it was almost exclusively white. Faerie "founder" Harry Hay's response was typical: "Oh, honey, we've tried to get people of color here". After further inquiry, a group talked about how they are open and liberal and would welcome more people of color to "join in the magic".

Over the years, some faeries have grappled with this subject. While some of the conversations have raised consciousness, others have been quite disturbing. Upon hearing that some people of color have talked about how uncomfortable they are at times in such a white environment, some faeries have responded with comments like "if Black people want more Blacks here, why don't they bring them here." There is also the objectification train of thought: "I wish more Blacks came here because I think Black guys are hot." These are only a few of many examples to illustrate why I find faerie race politics so problematic.

Still, I sometimes find it difficult to call out racism. First and foremost, it forces me to examine my own white privilege and look at the benefits that have been afforded me by growing up in white-dominated suburban America. And then, I think about

how that carries on in the assumptions that create my worldview today. Secondly, it is hard to challenge racism in a culture that does not acknowledge that racism even exists in our private little

**I dream of the faeries taking political action
which will demonstrate an anti-racist
commitment — knowing that this
includes taking risks.**

utopia. Finally, challenging racism often makes people defensive. Liberals often remain shockingly ignorant of race and class dynamics and how their (color) blinders prevent enduring efforts for justice.

For me, it was easy to land in faerieland. Some of my non-white friends have told me it could not be so easy for them. A lot of back-to-the-woods faeries own land in this beautiful area precisely because land is relatively cheap; a lot of African-Americans in Tennessee have lost their land since the 1930's due to foreclosure, tax sales, threats by racists or violence. This continues to this day. When I drive around here and see Confederate flags, they can appear as a relatively innocuous statement of Southern pride; however, people of color experience these as symbols of hatred and oppression (unfortunately, this symbol has been on a bumper sticker and t-shirts at a faerie gathering). As elsewhere, racial profiling is a harsh reality in Tennessee—Blacks and Latinos are especially targeted by the police for harassment.

At a faerie gathering, there are amazing, creative artists, cooks, activists, and gender freaks. There is also a good dose of white folks taking on what they think is genuine of another culture and merging it into their spiritual and/or party world. For example, romanticizing the "other"—especially the noble savage of American Indian culture—prevails as benign, sacred, and completely devoid of political awareness (even to the point where white faeries argue about the "correct" way to lead a sweat lodge ceremony).

Furthermore, a lack of class consciousness does not bode well for a radical change in the social dynamics of faerieland. Many faeries from middle or upper-middle class backgrounds

make fun of and put down "white trash" culture, which inherently perpetuates elitism by insulting the heritage of many of the white people who have lived in this area for a long time.

Faeries love to dance; but when someone starts spinning Eminem, it amazes me that people don't object. "The impact of Eminem's marketing and publicity . . . is actually allowing White youth to dismiss the historical and current existence of racism", wrote David Mays, founder of *The Source* magazine.

Two years ago, some faeries pried open the race issue with the FACT (Faeries of All Colors Together) gathering. I was saddened that some white faeries questioned the need for an event like this. I was not so surprised that it was sparsely attended compared to other faerie gatherings. Similarly, when my friend Mat and I were deciding whether or not to attend a lecture in Nashville on White Privilege, a few white friends reacted negatively because they were tired of feeling blamed for being white. Mat explained that the topic is not about blame, but about exploring our position in the world and learning to use the privilege we have inherited toward making changes in society.

This country was stolen from people of color (and continues to be). This country was built on the backs of people of color

(and continues to be). I dream of a different type of faerie community—one which recognizes the prevalence of racism and is eager to challenge it. I dream of faerie gatherings issuing calls for reparations. I dream of faeries challenging racial profiling. I dream of faeries shutting down (white) gay clubs which give people of color a harder time getting into. I dream of the faeries taking political action which will demonstrate an anti-racist commitment — knowing that this includes taking risks.

Recently, my boyfriend and I went to Gainesville, Georgia as part of his work for social justice throughout the South. We were going to witness the effects of environmental racism—the situating of multiple polluting factories in an African-American neighborhood. We heard horrific stories of the illnesses and deaths from lupus caused by toxic waste. While sitting there, I was reminded of the genocide in Guatemala—Gainesville is a place where Black people disappear, and as in Guatemala, those with the most power have deemed it so, while most people remain silent. This story repeats itself throughout the South.

When I returned home to faerieland I found it hard to jump back into the party mode that guides social affairs. At times I started to live by a new motto:

"If you can't be a part of the revolution, I won't be a part of your dance".

SPOOKY'S FURIOUS & FUNKY AUDIOPHONIC COLLAGE

REVIEW: Various artists remixed by DJ Spooky That Subliminal Kid, *Live Without Dead Time*. From *Adbusters* #47 "Nightmares of Reason," May/June 2003.

The *Live Without Dead Time* CD can be found in the anti-consumerist art magazine *Adbusters*; it highlights DJ Spooky's uncanny skill in crafting deep sonic climates with up-front agit-prop intentions. Paul D. Miller grew up in DC and now works as a conceptual artist, writer, and musician in NYC where he is best known as "DJ Spooky That Subliminal Kid" collaborating with the likes of ex-Rage Against the Machine vocalist Zach de la Rocha in a blistering anti-war shout called "March of Death." Rather than cobbling together tracks for the dance floor, DJ Spooky welds together seamless and densely-detailed collective hallucinations better suited for headphones.

His mix culture has always consciously drunk deep from the well of Big Ideas, refracting his flow of hiphop beats, dub pulses, and spoken-word samples through the thoughts of Felix Guattari, Marcel Duchamp, and the Frankfurt School; in interviews and his own writings, Spooky has often re-defined W.E.B. Dubois's *Double Consciousness* for "a generation raised on and in electricity," explaining that his rapid exchange cut-ups are attempts to summon the voices of a fractured African-American identity that's been dispersed, dispossessed, disrespected, and dispirited for far too long.

In the *Live Without Dead Time* project, Spooky lists thirty-one tracks, but the disc is really an effort to build a continuous algorithm of radical sonic signification, a single psychotic narrative for singularly psychotic times. Works by Public Enemy, Negativland, Asian Dub Foundation, the (International) Noise Conspiracy, Mad Professor, Spearhead, Ani DiFranco, Bad Brains, Allen Ginsberg, Sun Ra, Saul Williams, Meat Beat Manifesto, and Fugazi are torn apart and reassembled around spoken-word snippets from Mario Savio (from the Free Speech Movement), Marshall McLuhan, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and others. On paper, this looks like a bad case of Attention Deficit Disorder, but coming out of the speakers at full volume, it's actually bracing, raucous, and thoughtful.

The title of the CD is a reference to one of the more famous Situationist graffiti slogans of the May uprisings of 1968, and it critiques the mechanisms of social control which deliberately cultivate alienation, i.e. political repression, war, racism, and false consciousness. *Live Without Dead Time* is a funny, funky, and furious audiophonic collage that raises consciousness by challenging listeners to pull it apart to make their own connections.

—Don LaCoss

an introduction to music & dance by OhNo Bonobo

The Revolution will be a mix tape

Jazz. Funk. Folk. Punk. Trance. Hip Hop. Old Time. Blues. Electric. Acoustic. Recorded. Live. When we decided to do an issue on "Music and Dance," we knew that we could not devote too much time to any one genre or artist.

When we thought of Gil Scott Heron, we knew that the revolution could not be a multi-platinum CD by some corporate rock clone; we knew that the revolution would not be brought to us by Clear Channel Communications; we knew that the revolution would not censor anything, except for songs like "Courtesy of the Red, White, & Blue" by Toby Keith. We knew that the revolution would be live, or, at the very least, a home-made mix tape/CD passed among friends.

Do times of dark turmoil and unease trigger innovative cultural strides? When people as mainstream as the Dixie Chicks and Madonna critique conformity, modernity, religion, and war, nobody can ignore the evocation of creation against alienation. While not every song released this year is a direct reaction to the Bush Empire, much music today reflects the social turbulence of the new world disorder.

However, not every song should be overtly anti-Bush to qualify as radical. For example, during World War II, the most ground-breaking artists didn't make paintings that said "Hitler is bad." Just having the world swirling around our heads makes the cultural mutations sharper, richer. And what about the role of revolutionary culture?

Think of Watts-born bebop great Charles Mingus, who said of his 1957 recording "Haitian Fight Song": "I can't play it right unless I'm thinking about prejudice and hate and persecution, about how unfair it is. There's sadness and cries in it, but also determination."

Think of Detroit's Layabout's discussing songs like "Fuckalot" and "I'm Tired" that appeared on their record *No Masters* in the late 1980s. Songwriter Alan Franklin refers to the Situationists and the critique of everyday life as inspiration in his instigation of a sort of danceable Debord.

Think of punk shows that were as much DIY festivals, vegan potlucks, and a cooperative contact-sport in the sweat lodge of slam. Think of a folk music, traveler kid with a beat-up, bumper-sticker covered guitar, ready to sing you anything from the Earth First! or IWW songbook as you roast dumpstered tofu dogs over the open fire.

Think of eclectic, elaborate, anarcho-pagan rituals that hide inside orgiastic, half-naked electronic dance parties that last all night until elated participants collapse at sunrise. Think of any oppressed people for whom music is the only autonomous and indigenous tongue capable of uniting them and disarming the oppressor.

Can musical work consciously produced to incite during times of upheaval inspire dissidents to take that next step? Can songs help to change the opinions of those who are not already keen on revolutionary change? In the 1970s, the Slits

put out records that they described as "armed playground chants" for the punks living with no future in Thatcher's England. Around the same time, the Clash released the single "White Riot" with text printed on the back of the record sleeve that read: "Youth, after all, is not a permanent condition, and a clash of generations is not so fundamentally dangerous to the art of government as would be a clash between rulers and ruled."

Or is it just that there's something deliciously escapist and utopian about music? There are actual soundscapes of other worlds and places of dance (like the illegal warehouse raves of ten years ago and the Reclaim the Streets! hootenannies of today) where participants reorganize and reinvent the world in unexpected ways that dare us to think differently about the quotidian challenges facing us all.

In the recent documentary film *Amandla! A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony*, we see how the music and dance of the townships helped overturn the savagely racist South African police state. So, where is the tipping point that pushes music from ecstatic entertainment and escapism into raw, revolutionary epiphanies of excitement, rage, awareness, and intense concentration? Or how can it be all of the above? The following pages provide only a glimpse from a few of our writers about how the old culture can erode from within through the crucial beats and bold refrains of our dance and music.



a conversation with Paul Garon *Devil's Music*

Poet, storyteller, and cultural critic Paul Garon co-founded *Living Blues*, a periodical that, from its origins in the early 1970s, documented and supported blues music as an innovative and revolutionary African-American response to discrimination, abuse, and injustice by whites.

Forged in a crucible of slavery and torture, blues composition and performance, *Living Blues* expressed Black genius in resistance to the most abominable conditions; it also maintained that the white appropriation of blues music was an insidious form of cultural extermination that obscured the specific historical, political, sociological, economic, and psychological realities of the African-American experience.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Garon continued his challenging work on blues, perhaps best summed up in *Blues and the Poetic Spirit* (1975), a study that articulates how Black culture mobilized aggression, transgression, sexuality, humor, and folk magic in defiant opposition to repressive and oppressive white, Christian, capitalist civilization.

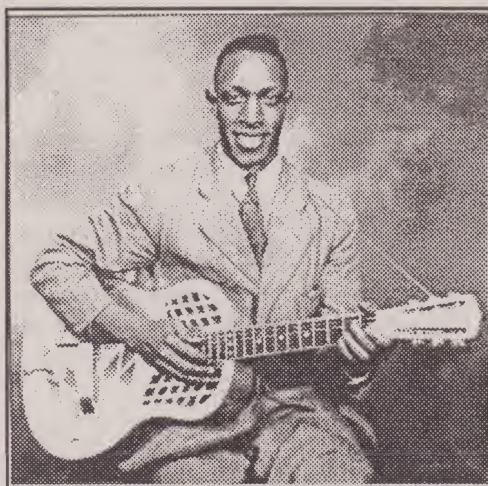
In late spring 1993, Garon spoke out again against "white blues" as ethnic cleansing in a guest editorial column in *Living Blues* that re-ignited the controversy, and he elaborated upon the issue further in the revised 1996 edition of *Blues and the Poetic Spirit*. Some of those same concerns also appear in Paul and Beth Garon's *Woman with Guitar: Memphis Minnie's Blues* (1992), a pioneering study of blues, gender, and liberation.

A number of Garon's essays on blues and rebellion have been reprinted in Ron Sakolsky's edited anthology *Surrealist Subversions: Rants, Writings and Images from the Surrealist Movement in the US* (Autonomedia, 2002). Garon's essay "White Blues" first appeared in a 1995 *Race Traitor: Journal of the New Abolitionism* and was reprinted and expanded in Noel Ignatiev and John Garvey's *Race Traitor Anthology* (Routledge, 1996).

An expanded version of *The Devil's Son-in-Law: The Story of Peetie Wheatstraw and His Songs*—Garon's 1971 study of the blues shouter, pianist, and guitar player William Bunch—has just been re-published by Charles H. Kerr Company. From 1930 to 1941, Bunch performed under the name "Peetie Wheatstraw," a mythic figure in African-American folklore who has appeared in a number of incarnations, from a fruit cart-pusher in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*

to a supernatural gangster in the blaxploitation movies of Rudy Ray Moore; as a blues artist, Peetie Wheatstraw was also billed as "the High Sheriff from Hell" and "the Devil's Son-in-Law." The Kerr reprint of Garon's book includes new research, illustrations, and a CD compilation of 23 of Bunch's best recordings. Now, the recent FE interview with Paul Garon:

FIFTH ESTATE: In this issue, we're investigating music and dance from an anarchist perspective. What has motivated me to speak to you about *The Devil's Son-In-Law* is your compelling observation in this book (and elsewhere) that blues performances "often depict desire in open opposition to reality," and that Wheatstraw's blues "construct a new pattern of imaginative fabric" woven from "reality, desire, and fantasy." You've written that this makes blues a natural object of surrealist interest; does it also make blues an object of interest for anarchists?



Peetie Wheatstraw

PG: To comprehend the surrealist interest in the blues requires the comprehension of the poetics of struggle. As surrealists, we see blues as the voice of a people distinctively victimized by the cruelest whims of white culture, but a people who, through poetry, have found a way to pierce the fabric of oppression with the tools of the imagination. I would think that surrealist goals and anarchist goals are identical in this respect. Indeed, surrealism provides anarchists with new tools with which they may not be familiar . . . yet. Most anarchists aren't familiar with surrealist theories of paranoia-criticism or automatism.

Blues singing and interpreting blues

singing obviously draws more on the former than the latter, but a theory of "artistic" production that focuses on the articulation of dissent and discontent should be of anarchist interest.

FE: I'm interested to hear more about what you say in your afterward about associating blues with "the Devil's music."

PG: I see the Devil used as an agent of sly, subversive, oppositional power by the blues singers, just as Christians articulated his use as simply "evil" or "sinning." Those blues singers who converted to Christianity or went back to the Church in their later years often refused to ever play blues again, thus reaffirming the connection between blues, devils and evil. But I'm the one who articulated certain "evils" as signs of progress, a la Hegel.

FE: One of your first essays on the poetics of Peetie Wheatstraw appeared in a periodical put out by the Students for a Democratic Society in 1970. In May 2001, you presented a paper on genealogy of the "John Henry" folksongs at the Midwestern Anarchist Bookfair in Chicago. To me, these seem to be unlikely audiences for a discussion of the blues . . .

PG: Shortly after the ten-minute talk on "John Henry" at the Midwestern Anarchist Bookfair, a young man came up to me and said, "As soon as you said 'John Henry' I was hoping that you would talk for at least an hour." That's not something I expected to hear at a convention of anarchists, but I was thrilled nonetheless.

The blues has brought me so much enjoyment and so much insight that I want as many people as possible to have the same feelings and similar ideas, and I'm always hoping that by sharing some of the perspectives I have developed, some listeners or readers will be drawn to find out more about it. By publishing in overtly political magazines like *Radical America*, I'm hoping that young people who are already radicalized will discover new affinities with African-American culture and life, and thus, new pathways to social change.

FE: Can you say more about how affinities with the blues can clear "new pathways for social change"?

PG: Prejudice is often the result of ignorance. An intense interest in the blues often leads to an interest in the performers, and even an interest in their audiences. Of course, white blues steps in here to guarantee one need never go near an African-American or an African-American idea to hear "blues." But let's assume this particular obstacle isn't in place. The blues are full of history, injustice, wise sayings, and more, and can provide an elaborate education in numerous subjects, from the ways of the South to sexual technique. And in doing so, one becomes familiar with the people who produced the blues, and this familiarity can lead to a reduction in prejudice.

And as for the revolutionary potential of the blues, I've always felt that looking at this form of poetic activity in historical context is helpful. I'm not suggesting that most or even many blues lyrics call directly for the overthrow of society. But a different form of negation takes place here. At the heart of the blues is the fundamental principle of opposition. The Black working-class blues singer rejects and even ridicules the repressive aspects of white bourgeoisie society, negating bourgeois ideology by the act of non-acceptance.

This form of rejection or negation doesn't comprise an effort to change society's structure, but at the time, it was the principal vehicle of poetic revolt for Blacks during the first third of the 20th century. Other forms of revolt existed, but they didn't relate to the Black working class as broadly as blues did. Thus, the blues had a significant function in relation to Black revolutionary activity today, by preserving the critical function of negation during that period by providing a sustained poetic attack on the superstructure of an exploitative society.

FE: In *The Devil's-in-Law*, you say that "the imagination is one of the most powerful weapons that one can bring into action against the forces of repression. Do imagination and creativity need repression to produce excellence?"

PG: We can't know since there are no unrepressed imaginations around to study. Civilization itself requires such a high degree of repression that repression itself becomes the number one obstacle to happiness.

Now, blues takes place in a highly charged, combustible atmosphere, of precisely the sort necessary for the creation of art and poetry. Language and its use under advanced capitalism is as distorted and bent as every other human function. While we depend upon the poetic imagination to prepare the ground for revolution by providing us with the truly wondrous image, it is precisely this capacity that is inhibited in modern society. Yet in the blues, powerful images of desire and liberation are constantly before us. And is it not the authentic poet's job, i.e., the blues singer's job, to restore language to its poetic function by assisting in formulating these images? This is one of the tasks carried out by the best of the blues songs.

Psychological revelation has always been a fascinating aspect of the blues for me. Those aspects of psychoanalysis that people often find to be the most far-fetched, like the theory of symbolism, see their confirmation time and again in blues songs. When the analyst confronts the patient with a phallic interpretation of her dream of snakes, we scoff. But when Blind Lemon Jefferson sings, "Some pretty mama better come and get this black snake soon," we laugh! Many times the blues treats consciously those aspects of mental life that are usually hidden by repression. For this reason we see the blues as a relatively unalienated art form. We are not suggesting that blues singers don't suffer from repression.

FE: You've taken a lot of heat for your position on the "white blues question." In 1997, you wrote an essay for *Race Traitor* where you said that "for those interested in the support and study of African-American culture, blues as purveyed by whites appears unauthentic and deeply impoverished; further, it too often represents an appropriation of Black culture of a type safely familiar." How do you account for the processes (and benefits) of assimilation, cultural preservation, and custodianship in regards to the white blues question? In other words, what about the perception that white blues musicians are "saving" the blues from obscurity?

PG: An interesting question! Of course, Aretha Franklin's career had a rebirth thanks to the Blues Brothers movie. And each time the rich white planter climbs up on the shoeshine chair, those shoeshine "boys" not only make their \$4 but get a \$1 extra in a tip from this generous fellow who has always known how to take care of "his boys." It seems insanely craven to me to actually pat the Blues Brothers on the back for their generosity in such matters, when there are other actions far more deserving of our attention. Are we congratulating them for giving African-Americans a role in the drama when in fact the African-Americans are the stars of the play?

This may be no more than the standard "reform versus revolution" arguments. Those who would congratulate the Blues Brothers are obviously reformist in their thinking, whereas those who see the treachery in the very existence of the Blues Brothers are more on the side of revolution in terms of seeing what social changes are necessary to bring about a more just world.

—Interview by Don LaCoss, April 2003, Chicago

The Revolution will be a festival—or it will be nothing at all. That situationist mantra ricocheted around my brain and reverberated through my soul in the late 1980s as a dreadlocked dropout hopping from festival to gathering to direct action. Genuine social upheaval would taste a little like sweat on the dance floor—or at least a kiss behind the barricades, comrades swapping spit and subverting the ascetic notion of resistance.

The concept of the early twenty-first century free festival involves abolishing the commodity system in the most joyful manner imaginable. I've attended gatherings and dance parties where the energy cultivated by participants felt a bit like the revolution in action; likewise, the best street protests often harness an uncanny mix of courage, spontaneity, and festivity.

Based on all the footage I've seen from the battle of Seattle to the streets of Prague and Quebec and from other global justice convergences, each event shared a variety of visionary contingencies incorporating colorful, musical, theatrical elements into the context of a street battle. Who among us doesn't admire the protester who takes time to dance joyously around a burning dumpster while ducking and dodging the barrage of tear-gas canisters?

In particular, the international movement known as Reclaim the Streets (RTS) intentionally combines the decadent frivolity of a dance with the fierce intensity of direct action. That the United States government has formally declared this far-flung, non-hierarchical network of anarchist mixmasters and street-party girls a terrorist organization can only testify to the impact of RTS events.

Writing for Berkeley's *Slingshot* in the summer of 2001, writer PB Floyd confronts the bizarre contradictions of a terrorist state calling this carnivalesque tactic terrorist: "Enjoyment, art, music and social intercourse [are] what we're all about. So it is particularly interesting that the FBI considers these dance-based parties as a terrorist threat. Where is the terror? Where is the violence?"

Floyd continues, "As far as we know, no RTS street party has ever exploded, emitted poisonous gas, or engaged in kidnapping. It is true that there has been wild dancing, loud music, flyers, banners, public art, and kissing."

Furthermore, for a massive, secretive, hydra-like government bureaucracy to describe RTS as an "organization" twists the language and our assumptions about what constitutes an entity. Floyd explains: "Reclaim The Streets is actually more a tactic than a movement or an organization. In 1996, activists in England decided to stage the first RTS 'street party' by holding a daytime rave at a busy intersection, complete with sound system, dancing, party games, and political spin. . . . Because it's fun and crosses over with the counter-culture, it's much easier

for a street party to attract a large crowd. A street party can effectively shut down a business district in a positive, militant, yet non-threatening way. Instead of flyers focusing on the world we want to build in the future, street parties permit a revolutionary society to be conducted in the here and now, right on the street for all to see."

In *Tearing Down the Streets*, Jeff Ferrell depicts RTS this way: "Masterful creators of cultural space, Reclaim the Streets participants flood retaken avenues with furniture, fiddlers and techno/rave sound systems, drummers and dancers, jugglers, clowns, and children, all the while hanging banners, painting graffiti, chalking sidewalk art, and otherwise overturning the arid aesthetics of the automotive corridor." Ferrell links RTS to Critical Mass cyclists and the IWW sabotage-and-solidarity ideal of creating counter-institutions for social relations in the belly of the beast, fused from equal parts "direct action and on-the-ground resistance managing to convert the conventional practice of everyday domination into its own undoing."

Other examples of festive revolt with more emphasis on the festive part include the Rainbow Family national gatherings in the US and Europe's notorious free festival culture that resulted in the passage of the UK's criminal justice bill in the early 1990s. According to CJ Stone's 1996 book *Fierce Dancing*, the UK scene that created the huge illegal Stonehenge festival was a "fusion of hippie idealism with punk politics."

In contrast, while the Rainbows here lack "punk politics," their lovey-dovey idealism is not exclusively apolitical. Started by the anarchist progeny of the Living Theater (Garrick Beck, son of Judith Malina and Julian Beck is one of the original Rainbows), the Rainbow Family has always possessed a strong anarchist element. In *People of the Rainbow*, Michael Niman contends, "The Rainbow family is divided among members whose political activism is based in spirituality, whose political activism precludes spirituality, and whose spirituality precludes political activism. All are united, however, in their rhetorical support for a nonviolent, nonhierarchical cooperative society."

For whatever derogatory remarks some might make about the Rainbows, they have put their bodies on the line to stave off the federal crackdown on free assembly. Anything from a new age gathering to an academic conference can lay claim to the conviviality, intimacy, and festal culture invoked by writers like Hakim Bey; however, it takes a particular vision and reckless determination to publicly defy the government's attempt to regulate and license everything in the manner that Rainbows have with their annual attempts at practical anarchy in the national forests.

Just before the turn of the century, new kinds of North

the revolution will be a festival

Free festivals are a threat to mainstream capitalist society in america. Anyone questioning the commodification of our public lands and national forests, anyone who believes in the right to peaceably assemble, or anyone supporting a worldview where human rights come before property rights will be seen as a threat.
—Free Festival Manual 2002

American festivals began to emerge that kept the anti-authoritarian flavor of Rainbow but dropped the ex-Deadhead, acid-flashback, “we LUUUUHVVV you” stigma that alienated so many people. Coming out of the alternative dance music milieu, projects like SPAZ (Semi-Permanent Autonomous Zones) and the Autonomous Mutant Festival arose to provide a forum for “freeks, geeks, artists, DJs, performers, musicians, MCs, punks, ravers, clowns, teknomads, riot grrls, bboys, hippies, zippies, yippies, and YOU.”

Of course, for us, it’s not so much about which fashion statement or musical tastes dominate the scene.

Some festivals that contain that juicy kernel of creativity and autonomy can grow into more commercialized caricatures of themselves. Festivals that refuse their own revolutionary roots will spawn new revolutions. Certainly, the radical impulses that birthed the Michigan Womyn’s Music festival have also sparked the defiant counter-festival known as Camp Trans, where radical F-to-M and M-to-F transpeople challenge the binary gender essentialism of the Womyn’s music establishment. Furthermore, Burning Man has probably suffered from too much publicity, and the Bread and Puppet festival in Vermont finally ended when a participant died. After the last Domestic Resurrection Circus and Pageant in 1998, Director Peter Schumann openly acknowledged that Bread and Puppet had outgrown itself, with the spectacular aspects being usurped by the Spectacle.

Of course, many greedy promoters have since the days of Woodstock tried to co-opt creative outbursts for obscene amounts of cash, but free-fest culture still thrives outside of those margins. But still, the magic of the marvelous can invade even the mundane musical mall of commercial concerts. I’m sure that people attending Ani DiFranco, Spearhead, or even Dixie Chicks shows this summer will taste some delicious resistance. What distinguishes our radical festivals from commodity culture’s version of the same comes from quality and intent. “Free” implies the lack of a “cover charge”—or at least a “no one turned away for lack of funds” policy—but also a state of mind for participants.

The authors of the ‘zine *Free Festival Manual* explain it like this: “A free flow of ideas may not be possible within the confines of a festival that is based on the framework of the classic American rock festival, devised in the late 60s as a way to capitalize on the explosion of youth energy and repackage the ‘experience’ and sell it back to new generations. The free festival evades this trap. You can’t buy it, and you can’t sell it—it’s open to anyone who can accept the responsibility of self-government. . . . A free festival is also perhaps the unique meeting point between scholarly political philosophy and transcendental spirituality; textbook ‘anarchists’ get to actually experience feelings of anarchy that go beyond words into the realm of the metaphysical.”

Far from advocating drop-out-ism, free festivals propose the creation of new social relations in tangible defiance of law, license, and leader. While we cannot document the exact date in



antiquity when humans first gathered to get high and dance all night, we know that festivals *go way back*. There may never have been a time when we *did not* get together with comrades to celebrate, vibrate, intoxicate, and fornicate.

Clearly, the implications of Homeland Security for our homespun spontaneity are devastatingly depressing. But this does not mean that we simply inject our insurrections with more serious sobriety. In fact, I see nothing as more realistic and practical for these times than confident, unapologetic, and joyful dancing on the ruins of the-world-as-we-know-it.

Even if dancing *is* a terrorist act, let us side with the dancers. Even if disseminating information about how to have a safe drug experience is a threat to national security, let us express solidarity with the safe partiers. Even if an unprecedented number of people are in prison for possessing, using, or distributing mind-altering medicines, let us fight the drug war by demanding immediate amnesty and decriminalization. Even if hosting a festival could get us all thrown in jail under the new RAVE Act, let us still create festivals. As the New World Order constantly devises new draconian and dystopian tactics to demolish our dreams, we cannot understate the revolutionary dynamism of living for our desires.

Long live the revolutionary festival! All love to the festive revolutionaries! —Sunfrog, Pumpkin Hollow, May 2003



Electronic Dance Music & Social Liberation Sacred Sweet Wicked Ecstasy

by Apollo

Editors' note: Thanks to some typically sleazy last-minute conniving by Democratic Senator Joseph Biden, the "Reducing Americans' Vulnerability to Ecstasy" (R.A.V.E.) Act was signed into Federal law by Bush on April 30, 2003.

The bill's introduction says in no uncertain terms that raves are "drug dens" where promoters sell illegal drugs and charge exorbitant prices for Ecstasy paraphernalia, such as bottled water, massage oil, and glow sticks. Under the law's measures, property owners/renters/leasers and event promoters are criminally liable for drug use on their premises and may be fined up to \$250,000 and nine years in prison. The effect, of course, is to discourage the electronic music events since the actions of just one dancer could result in a fine or jail time for event organizers.

The rationale for the R.A.V.E. Act (and similar state and municipal anti-rave laws) is allegedly to open up another front in the ludicrous War on [some] Drugs. But it appears that Ecstasy is mentioned by name in the law only in the interest of a cutesy acronym logo, as cops and prosecutors have said explicitly that they are looking to go after crank and pot users as well.

However, in the following article, Apollo offers a deeper look into anti-rave legislation. Apollo is a rave producer, founder of the Moksha Tribe collective, a house music DJ, and has been involved with dance culture for over thirty years. He lives in San Francisco.

This is an excerpt of a much longer work: available at www.livingart.com/raving/articles/housemusic101.htm

Those who believe that the current oppression of raves (and dance culture in general) is based entirely on a desire to stop the spread of the drug Ecstasy are missing the broader context. Crucial to understanding this atmosphere of police and governmental oppression is our culture's long historical fear of the union of body and soul represented by dance. If we are to fight this new wave of repression effectively, we must first understand something about the hate, fears, and prejudice of what really drives it beyond anti-drug rhetoric.

The house and modern electronic dance music scenes grew out of an oppressed peoples' need to build alternative communities in which they find refuge from the bigotry and racism of mainstream culture. The new dance culture arose, as did prior musical and dance movements in this country, from underground subcultures, evolving spiritually and aesthetically in the US out of the need for African-Americans, gays, lesbians and Latinos to build a community through dance.

Before the Stonewall bar uprising in Greenwich Village in 1969, the gay subculture was really an underground, secret society: all states outlawed gay sex by prohibiting sodomy and related non-standard sexual practices (some still have sodomy laws on the books).

Further, same-sex dancing was prohibited. And these laws were enforced: police regularly raided gay clubs and other meeting places, packed the participants off to jail, charged them with a variety of morals related offenses and, the worst part for most, published their names in local newspapers, all of which gave most pre-'69 gay dance clubs the clandestine feel of underground raves or of speakeasies during Prohibition.

—collage by Freddie Baer (1992)

In the years after Stonewall and before AIDS, tens of hundreds of oppressed, abused, rejected gay kids who had experienced the worst kind of mind-fucking while growing up in rural and suburban America poured into NYC to express themselves freely as sexual beings for the first time. Some had never actually seen a room full of people like themselves. They certainly had no support groups or community to grow into.

For them, this was the fulfillment of a secret and distant dream: life for the first time. They wanted to build a world that accepted them, where they could have sexual relationships without punishing guilt, self-hatred or suicidal thoughts.

Among other things, these sexual rebels started to build a new paradigm for social interactions on the dance floor, intuitively based on ancient rituals. Instinctively they seemed to know that dance would help make them whole—dance would exalt both their bodies and souls. They would be FREE for the first time, and they would be freed from oppression, in part, through the power of communal dance.

Dancing is the Devil's Work

It is the body, of course, which is the vehicle of dance, meaning that people's attitudes towards dance are shaped by cultural and religious beliefs about the body and its uses. From its start, Christianity developed a complex love-hate relationship with the body for a variety of reasons. For one, early Christians wished to disassociate themselves from pagan beliefs.

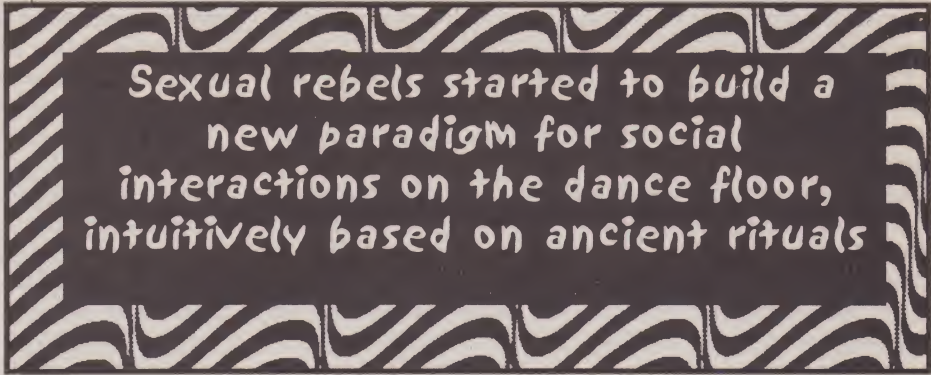
Linked to this was the influence of Neo-Platonist philosophy—there's no need to get into a detailed discussion of philosophy here except to say that early Christian thought was fueled by the Neo-Platonic teaching that flesh was inferior to the intellect and the spirit. (This has always been a paradox to me, for the core belief of Christianity, the incarnation, seems to be a powerful metaphor for the need to redeem the soul through the flesh.) From this we arrive at the dreadful bifurcation of the body and the soul and the origin of much unhappiness in our culture.

It may have been Increase Mather who defined the American Puritan attitude towards dance in 1685 with his tract against "Mixed or Promiscuous Dancing": "sober and grave Dancing of Men with Men, or of Women with Women" was okay "in due season and with moderation," but "wanton" (that it is to say, "pleasurable") dancing, especially "Gynecandrical Dancing," was literally considered evil. When one recalls that US Attorney-General John Ashcroft adheres to a Christian sect that forbids dancing, we can see how little has really changed in three hundred years.

Puritanism remains as powerful a force in politics and culture as ever. Work, the Puritan focal point, is the centerpiece of our daily lives, and pleasure is still suspect.

Anything that is perceived to interfere with productivity of the individual is damned. In Mather's day, the controllers used hell-fire sermons as the vehicle of social control; now it's anti-drug pseudo-science.

Dance culture has always been under very heavy fire in this



Sexual rebels started to build a
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country. My grandmother was arrested repeatedly during Prohibition when she went dancing at jazz clubs in the twenties, not because she was drinking the devil's brew, but because she was dancing the devil's dance.

Dancing to rock 'n' roll was bitterly opposed because it was believed that this passionate "Negro" music (facilitated by "reefer madness") would lead to teenage promiscuity and social chaos.

For a few brief years in the seventies, everyone, even the elite white man, was disco dancing, but this came to an end in the Reagan years when we were all reminded of the Puritan dictum that playing too hard can lead to unhappiness, and making money was a far more acceptable and righteous way to spend one's time.

No, things haven't changed that much. Good, righteous mainstream Americans don't dance all night long to tribal beats of the devil's music because it may reduce productivity and undermine the Gross National Product.

Pagan beats—those of house music, in particular, given its evocative fleshy-spiritual dimensions—unleash all those disorderly pagan connections between the body and soul. We can't have that in this rigidly controlled, work-and-money-oriented Puritan society that we all seem to accept without question. Puritans, after all, are suspicious of pleasure, especially pleasures of the flesh.

The Ancient Rites of House Music

It's got something to do with the speed of the beats. It's hypnotic, tribal, and primal. That particular speed has worked for thousands of years, which is why you can spin in Arab music, Bhangra music, Aboriginal music... You can take all these different cultures and find the same beat, between 125-130 bpm. It's there in ecstatic, trance music, where people shake and spin until they reach a state of hyperventilation and psychedelic alpha-wave experience. In a sense (house) is regressive music. You're going back to the roots of why music was invented: to reach ecstatic and visionary states, in a communal tribal celebration.

— Simon Reynolds, "Where 'now' lasts longer,"
in *Blissed Out* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1990)

The belief that individuals can achieve spiritual liberation through communal dance and sexuality is nothing new. The concept of salvation through music, dance and eroticism is ancient and can be found in both Eastern and Western cultures. Many specifically religious rituals were, and still are,

constructed around communal dance — often with a sexual component.

It is primarily in the West, however, that one encounters the total divorce of body and soul. This distinction between the sacred and secular, the spirit and the flesh, is part of the Judeo-Christian tradition but has little currency in non-Western cultures. In pre-Christian Polynesia, for example, communal dance and sexuality were integrated into daily life. The arioi (a troupe of dancers-actors) would go from island to island to celebrate the cult of Oro, god of rain and fertility.

The core of their performance was sacred dance where the men would wear mock phalluses made from animal bladders and simulate sexual intercourse. On Tahiti, men and women danced day and night to praise their gods, celebrate the completion of various communal projects, honor the chiefs, and for the sheer fun of it.

Dance was also an extremely important feature of many American Indian religious rituals. The Hopi calendar revolved around a sacred dance cycle, and they used dance to connect with the very forces that they believed governed the universe, such as the Snake Dance held in late summer to summon life-giving rain. The gods dance in India, and Shiva, the god of creation and destruction, is represented as Nataraja, Lord of Dance. Shiva is depicted as a four-armed deity, shown in a dancing mode, his raised left leg signifying that one of the blessings of dance is to free the dancer from worldly cares. The Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria believe dance opens direct channels to the gods, and speak of actually being “mounted” by a god during a sacred dance in which the dancer actually makes the god within his or her body while in a deep trancelike state.

One could cite many other examples of non-Western traditions where dance plays a crucial role in ritual and worship. In the West, however, there is much ambivalence about dancing in any context, and especially the religious.

Judeo-Christian culture embraced the notion of the bifurcation of body and soul, adopted a fearful attitude towards dance that aroused bodily passion, especially in a spiritual context and, for the most part, confined dancing to a strictly secular activity. Although the Hasidic movement of the eighteenth century and some visionary Protestant sects like the Shakers incorporated ecstatic dance into worship, mainstream Western Judeo-Christian societies from the Renaissance onward severed dancing from any spiritual content.

While I have always felt that the best communal dance experiences were transformative events where body and soul, sexuality and spirituality, worked together to produce a very valuable altered state of consciousness, it was not until I studied non-Western cultures that I came to understand that what I once thought was addictive behavior was actually an ancient and very natural part of life.

This ecstatic dance was the glue that bonded many of the world's tribal and other communities, and it was the source of energy and validation of the self and soul in the intentional communities in which I lived most fully. From African priests to Korean shamans, there was and still is the belief that dance and music can open communication with intangible powers and

produce tangible benefits for the communities involved: self-knowledge, fuller understanding of the natural world, good health, and a sense of belonging to a supportive group in an often dark and hostile but ultimately understandable universe.

The exquisite integration of the erotic and the spiritual in early house music partly derives, I believe, from primarily non-Western traditions of salvation and release through communal music and dance.

It's not at all surprising that African-American culture gave birth to the modern yet ecstatic, erotic yet spiritual dance experiences and music in underground gay venues like the Paradise Garage and the Warehouse. The vibe of these parties was intensely pagan, non-Western, and exuberantly non-Puritan.

The dancers were people who were all about loss of control and of giving oneself over to a collective eroticism, a movement into an altered state of consciousness resembling that spoken by the ancients when they describe possession by spirits. I believe that all of us who were passionate about this new dance experience knew intuitively at the time that what we were doing was something far more ambitious than throwing

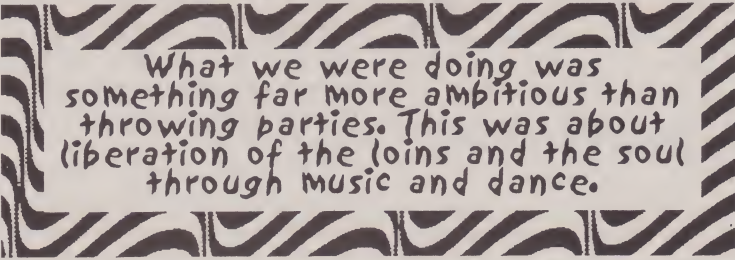
parties. This was about liberation of the loins and the soul through music and dance.

That said, though, I want to be clear that I am in no way suggesting that the form and content of house music was intentionally designed to resurrect some pagan tribal

rituals. This desire was, I believe, bubbling below the surface as part of some natural need that is consciously suppressed in the West. The context in which house was born — oppression, mortality connected to sexuality, the need for redemption and release through communal dance — brought these needs and ancient rites to the surface, and the body and soul were once again united in music and dance. Much of the early rave community was well aware of these pagan erotic, spiritual ecstatic trance dance experiences, and this may explain why the spiritual symbols used at early raves were intentionally non-Western and most often evoked Eastern and Hindu erotic-spiritual dance traditions. To this day, these intentions are still clearly evident at many electronic dance music events, especially those given by the psytrance community, where the connections are more explicit.

With these issues underlying and informing the electronic dance experience, it is no wonder that dance culture is again a source of moral panic for a full spectrum of cultural authorities. The language of these crackdowns always comes wrapped in the codes of law enforcement and public safety — after its investigation of electronic dance music subcultures, Congress declared that “raves have become little more than a way to exploit American youth.”

And though anti-rave bills are most commonly associated with Ecstasy, it is not the drug and drug dealers that are really the issue, but rather the ecstasies of the dance. The Puritanical terror of the ecstatic movement of bodies has been drafted into the Drug War, and unless we work to subvert the Puritan paradigm and fundamentally change this culture's anxieties over unruly flesh and mind, more of this kind of oppression should be expected.



What we were doing was something far more ambitious than throwing parties. This was about liberation of the loins and the soul through music and dance.

Joe Hill: The IWW & the Making of a Revolutionary Workingclass Counterculture, by Franklin Rosemont, Charles H. Kerr, Chicago, 2003, 639 pp. \$17.00

"... singing through the hard times for the good times to come..."

—Utah Phillips, IWW storyteller and folk singer

The day I received this book, I also went to see *Amandla! A Revolution in Four Part Harmony*, a documentary about the protest music of Apartheid South Africa. In the film, freedom fighter Lindiwe Zulu told about the reaction when black activists would lose one of their comrades in the struggle. They believed that too much mourning dampened the spirit, so after a brief mourning period, they began singing. I was reminded of IWW martyr Joe Hill's famous words, "Don't waste any time mourning; organize!"

To round out the experience, the next day I went to see Utah Phillips perform. He sang Joe Hill songs and in fine oral tradition, told IWW stories as if he'd been there. What a treat it was! I was ripe for the experience of reading the book.

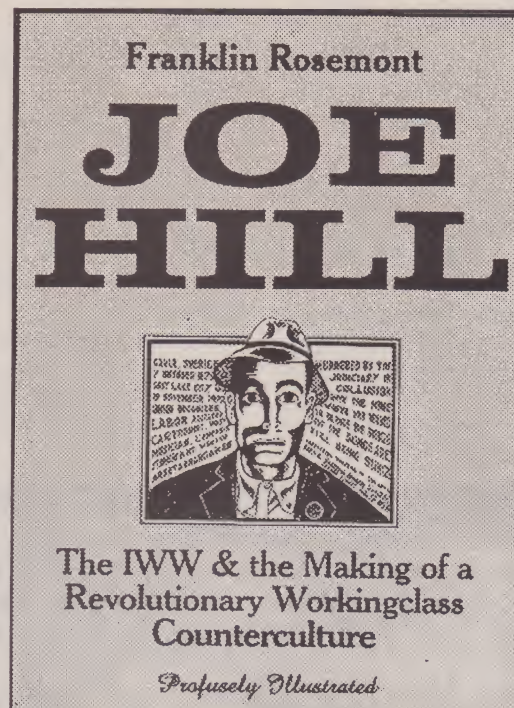
Rosemont's book is compelling, blending the best of labor history and lore with popular culture and contemporary style. He illustrates the extent to which Hill, the Swedish-born IWW who was executed by the State of Utah in 1915 for a murder he did not commit, has become the premier folk hero in our movement, with literally thousands of references to Hill in literature, music, poetry and art.

The "profusely illustrated" book bursts with songs and poetry to fan the flames of discontent as much now as when they were written. It puts what is known about Hill within the broader context the IWW movement and the culture built around it.

This meaty text about one of our favorite Wobbly bards is well indexed and referenced (the bibliography is nearly 30 pages) and provides a valuable guide to further reading and for other researchers. Rosemont not only examines Hill's own stories, songs, artwork, cartoons, and poetry, but those about Hill as well, and here, the real heart of the book lies. Despite the deficiency of concrete biographical information about Hill, much has been written about him, often using a combination of interviews (not always the most reliable source), newspaper accounts (almost never accurate), and government documents (need I say more?).

Speculation and guesswork about Hill's personal life, experiences, and thoughts dominate most earlier biographies of

Book Review



Hill; but Rosemont analyzes and explores each fact of Hill's life and work, however small it may seem, in order to shed more light on the historic rather than the fanciful man.

Rosemont begins with a background of the IWW and conflicting views of its history. He then moves to Hill's thoughts on internationalism, race, "sky pilots" (preachers), Marxism, the law, and wilderness to his influence among the later day beats, hippies, and surrealists, interspersing the text with reproductions of Hill's artwork. He effectively employs what is known about Hill's personality and activities to set forth either the probability or unlikelihood of some of the more obscure information.

Part of what makes the book entertaining is the surprising connections Rosemont finds through his extensive research, from Carl Sandburg to Gary Snyder and Judi Bari. All the familiar and unfamiliar characters he introduces who were moved in some way to express their love for Hill, and the impact he made upon them. Rosemont

has done a remarkable job of weaving together and linking the words and memories of many people he's interviewed or corresponded with over the years who knew Hill, or were friends of those who did, as well as thoughtfully utilizing many other sources.

Equally enjoyable, Rosemont debunks of the many myths surrounding Hill, perpetuated by self-serving academics and mean-spirited authors, whose research and writings on the IWW have been erroneous more often than not. Rosemont's dissection of these myths is central to the book and a delight to read.

In addition, what emerges is Rosemont's wry sense of humor, and more important, his own passion for IWW history and lore. It's contagious, and it's clear that he had fun writing this book. —Julie Herrada, Ann Arbor, May 2003

Available from Fifth Estate Books: See page 35 for details

"Hill's story is indissolubly linked to dissent, poetry, protest, the struggle for freedom and a good life for all... [T]here is something special about Hill and his songs, and that those who sing them want to share that 'something' with their listeners. In that sense, every time you hear a Joe Hill song it's a kind of memorial."

—Franklin Rosemont

An Introduction to Paul Halmos

Dancing for Our Lives

by Peter Werbe

The following essay couldn't have entered my consciousness at a better time. It was 1962, and I had spent my late teens and early twenties reading intensely in an attempt to discover the fundamental qualities of existence.

Reality seemed pretty bleak. Rigid conformity, compulsory patriotism, fear of atomic annihilation, and a cultural wasteland of bad movies and boring music predominated in 1950s mainstream society. However, on the margins existed counter-critiques: Beat fiction and poetry, black artistry producing jazz and rhythm and blues, classic left and anarchist writings of bygone eras, and a bulk of literature spanning the previous 80 years which suggested that something other than what Henry Miller dubbed an "air-conditioned nightmare" was possible.

Still, most of what I read wasn't particularly cheering and much of my sense of life was shaped by the fiction I was devouring. My view of the world as bleak, cold and devoid of meaning was reinforced by writing such as Thomas Wolfe's frontispiece to *You Can't Go Home Again*, where he wrote, "that all man's life was like a tiny spurt of flame that blazed out briefly in an illimitable and terrifying darkness. . . ." or life as absurd as I went through Camus' *The Stranger*, Sartre's play *No Exit* or even (looking for a respite) Vonnegut's whimsical *Sirens of Titan*.

Rebellion—as the alternative to conformity—appeared admirable and ethical but seemed always to end either in insanity ("I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness. . . ." in Allen Ginsberg's famous first clause in "Howl"), death (as at the end of teen-gang fiction such as Harold Robbin's *A Stone for Danny Fisher* or Bud Shulman's *The Amboy Dukes*), or defeat ("He loved Big Brother," the final words of Orwell's *1984*). Decidedly gloomy choices: go crazy, get killed, or be vanquished.

Fortunately for me, in that same period, assaults on the structure and culture of the dominant society were emerging that brought much of what I had been reading into question. Rebels were marching and organizing for civil rights all over the American South and refusing to back down even when confronted with lynch mobs and the iron hand of the state.

The Beat critique of the 1950s "plastic culture" made more sense as artists began to poke their heads up after the stifling McCarthy Era. Watching all of this unfold from sit-ins at Southern lunch counters to listening to obscenity-laced attacks on censorship and frank on-stage discussions of sexuality by comedian Lenny Bruce, suggested maybe there was something here other than the "maw of the all-engulfing night" (Wolfe).

It was at this point of dawning realization of other possibilities that I read Paul Halmos' somewhat plodding academic essay, "The Decline of the Choral Dance," which jumped out at me from among

the others collected in *Man Alone: Alienation in Modern Society* (Dell 1962).

The book includes a range of writings from Marx (his solid early work), James Baldwin, Lewis Mumford, Eric Fromm and others describing the human condition and what we have lost under capitalism and civilization. I was delighted. Not only were my feelings of dread and loathing about this society confirmed, but the authors all suggested that the emptiness (the "Horror," in Joseph Conrad's phrase) was not the innate human condition at all, but something socially imposed.

Halmos' description of primal people integrating the mysteries and passages of life through mass community dances filled with rich symbolism (or reality, as they assert) and their almost universal appearance throughout the world suggests a socio-biology of emotion and bodily motion that had to be destroyed in order to make people will-

ing to sit at desks and stand in front of machines for hours each day. The reflection of this, and the longing for it, can be seen in the maintenance of group peasant dances up to modern times where they increasingly only exist as memento.

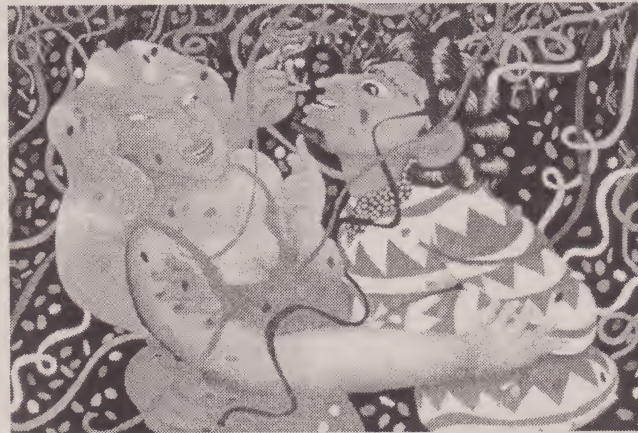
But Halmos' prediction that communal dancing would be excluded entirely by couple-istic formality may have been somewhat premature. The free-form, mass, psychedelic dances of the 1960s spoke to the longing for ecstatic motion and community but also functioned as resistance to the dominant culture which prescribed dancing in couples in set patterns. These same

qualities exist in the rave culture among young people today described elsewhere in this issue, but no less so than in some punk scenes and even among those who attend performances of bands like Detroit's *Layabouts* which are more like community festivals than concerts.

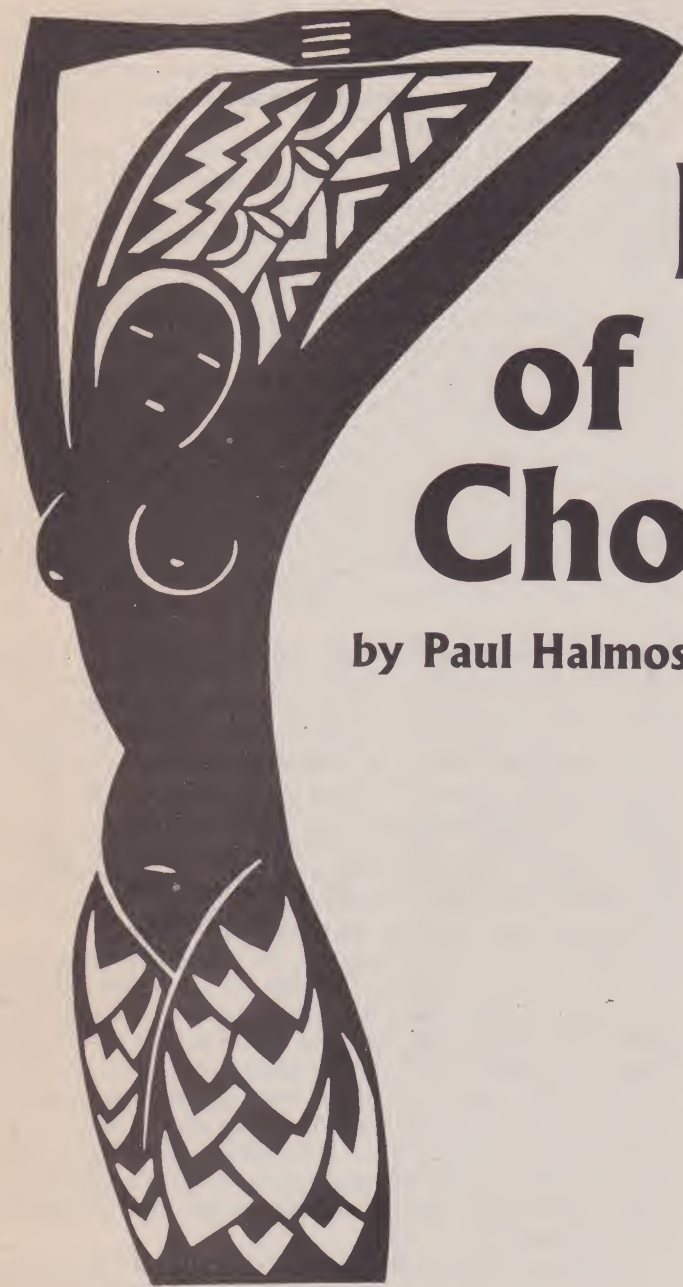
I would urge a cautionary note here, however, that we not allow ourselves to become too self-congratulatory over our gestures towards reassertion of communal dances. I say, gestures, because contemporary communal dancing can easily devolve into commercial styles, devoid of any radical impulse such as some disco of the 1970s. (For example, what we called the Brownian Bump, the former word referring to the physics principle of the random collision of molecules and the Bump being a goofy, but fun dance where people, well, bumped butts).

Even the most superficial disco can be fun, but it's not the stuff of which Halmos writes. Our dancing will become imbued with more importance and deeper meaning the more we are part of the process of destroying the culture of death that now controls the planet. Casey Neill sings about "dancing on the ruins of multinational corporations," which sounds good enough as long as we are also building another world where we will all dance together.

Make it so.



Illustrator: Stephen Goodfellow www.goodfelloweb.com



The Decline of the Choral Dance

by Paul Halmos

strong emotions collectively. Admittedly, there have been reports of some danceless peoples, yet so long as we accept testimonies from observers on animal-dances — e.g., Kohler's reports that his apes had danced too — we cannot be far wrong in concluding that the dance was a universal play-form in pre-cultural communities.

Primitive peoples dance for every occasion — birth, initiation, marriage, death, war and so on. Sometimes, the motive-force appears to be an overflow of vitality and joy, at other times it seems to issue from a craving for the dissolution of the self, or it may be linked with magical practices, e.g. rainmaking dances, hunting dances, or war dances.

Oesterley believed that "all dancing was originally religious and was performed for religious purposes." He insisted that the dance was sacred in origin and that every other type of dance was derived from this original religious dance. Oesterley sensed, that in the dance, the individual exerted self to reach beyond limited selfhood and merge with a larger reality. From the biological point of view, this larger reality is the totality of the species, and not much can be gained by saying that a communion with the community is merely a symbolization of a more significant and higher union, a union with God or with the essential principle of the universe. A social communion is complete and there is nothing in it which transcends the species.

Whether the ostensible purpose of these primitive dances is ani-

"One may judge of a King by the state of dancing during his reign." — *Ancient Chinese maxim.*

Artistic expression, even when dilettante, is one of the most satisfactory forms of objectifying and thus projecting inner tensions. The dance is undoubtedly the most ancient form of artistic expression; its unique position among the arts is guaranteed by more than mere seniority: as we have seen, the dance is essentially a cooperative art, an art of the group and not of the solitary individual. Though there are isolated examples of solo and couple dances among primitive peoples, they are not truly solo or couple performances; they presuppose the presence of singing and rhythmically tapping audiences who open the dance or who join in it later. In pre-cultural human society, dance must have been a universal form of expressing

Primitive peoples dance for every occasion—birth, initiation, marriage, death, war and so on. Sometimes, the motive-force appears to be an overflow of vitality and joy, at other times it seems to issue from a craving for the dissolution of the self, or it may be linked with magical practices, e.g. rain-making dances, hunting dances, or war dances.

mistic-religious or magical-material, one constant feature in them is that they are group performances and not solo or couple acts. The main crises of human life are dramatized, couched in movement and shared by all who participate in the dance — alleviating the afflictions which inevitably follow from human existence, and enriching and ornamenting the joys which are incidental to life.

The choral dance is the physical manifestation of groupward drives. Whatever vital experience the primitive group has to face, its sharing by every member is made possible by the translation of that experience into rhythmic, muscular movements simultaneously executed by all. The speechless eloquence of posture and gesture supplemented the primitive vocabulary of prehistoric humanity and became a powerful medium of social intercourse.

The choral dance was not merely instrumental in securing group unity for ulterior purposes like a good harvest or the propitiation of evil demons. The groupward drives, the yearning for a tangible, physically manifested unity exist on their own account and suffuse the dance ritual whatever its ostensible purpose. In the choral dance, an inarticulate consensus and an absolute fraternity are reaffirmed from time to time, thus tightening group cohesion and conserving solidarity. In it, the individuals find assurance that they are not alone.

In some early civilizations, this potential of the choral dance was recognized, e.g. the training of the Greek soldier included the performance of martial dances. The dance "was a means of giving soldiers carriage, agility and health — and cultivating *esprit de corps*." [Troy and Margaret Kinney.] John Martin interprets the meaning of primitive war dances in a similar way: "War dances not only constitute a popular form of entertainment but serve at the same time to crystallize group solidarity."

While Oesterley contended that the dance was originally nothing but a vehicle of religious mysticism, to us it appears that it was a medium of a paradigmatic experience which at its core was strictly social or communal.

The experience of a union, however, is not merely a gratification of social hunger, of the instinct of gregariousness, that is, of biosocial need. The satisfaction of this propensity is often accompanied by an auto-intoxication comparable only to sexual ecstasy which results in a temporary draining of the will from stubborn self-regard and in the gathering of reckless sacrificial emotions. Under these conditions, individual separateness disappears and phylic unity is complete; and it is under these conditions that the group's reality is supreme and exclusive. Through the choral dance, primitive people successfully achieved two objectives:

- (a) the effective sharing of the burdens of conflicts and tensions, a sharing which reaffirmed and deepened the bonds of fellow-feeling;
- (b) a catharsis through the rhythmic communal rapture which renewed and strengthened the individual.

The choral dance, therefore, was not only a socio-political vehicle of group solidarity but also a primitive method of group psychotherapy.

This second function is effectively portrayed by Curt Sachs: "Repressed powers are loosed and seek expression; an innate sense of rhythm orders them into lively harmony. Harmony deadens and dissipates the will, the dancer gives himself over to the supreme delights of play prescribed by custom, gives himself over to the exhilaration which carries him away from the monotony of everyday life, from palpable reality, from the sober facts of experience. . . . In the ecstasy of the dance, we bridge the chasm between this and the other world. . . . Captivated and entranced we burst earthly chains, and trembling, feel in tune with all the world."

The chasm is that which exists between one individual and an-

other. The transcendence of solitude has always appeared to mystics, poets, and philosophers as a communion with the Godhead, a surrender to the essential beauty of nature, or an acceptance of the universe. That which they experienced was a spiritualized, symbolical expression of their biosocial life.

Over and above the satisfaction of these biosocial needs and the individual therapeutic benefits, there were other reasons which made man seek for, and submit to, absolute collective loyalties. Individual survival, as much as group survival, dictated close cohesion: the small groups were surrounded by a hostile nature and by an often hostile rivalry of neighboring groups. When the tribes had been welded into states and empires and the preservation of security was no longer a daily anxiety, collective loyalties took on a more diffuse, anemic character — thickened only occasionally in emergencies. Consequently, a ritual of communal solidarity was no longer a routine practice. At the lower level of local groups, it lingered on for a while as a rare festivity to be held on a few specified occasions. It is for this reason that the choral dance reached its final form in the prehistoric era and has not changed its basic patterns ever since. Curt Sachs explains, "Strange as it may sound — since the Stone Age, the dance has taken on as little in the way of new forms as of new content. The history of the creative dance takes place in prehistory."

The choral dance as the cultural form of a pre-cultural, biosocial practice survived for a long time. We find choral dances widely practiced as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These are, however, no longer the comprehensive experiences their pre-cultural predecessors used to be. Even so they continued to fulfill an integrative function in rural communities which were isolated and enslaved by feudal bondage. If there were real peasant communities under feudal lordship, these were made possible by integrative practices issuing from the community itself and not by the strictures imposed on the community by feudal rule. The latter could have created only compounds of serfs and not village communities.

Towards the end of the feudal era, the choral dance began to decline. For some time after the sixteenth century, choral dances and couple dances persisted together. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the spread of the waltz, the polka, and the Boston finally ended the popularity of the choral dances. During the intervening centuries, there were numerous pointers suggesting the presence of some kind of a transition in this process. The group is broken up into independent couples: the minuet, allemand, passepied, bourrée, gigue are mixed dances with a strong choral framework; the cotillion-quadrille type of square dances represents the link between the choral and couple dances.

This later transition is already a historical and not a phylogenetic process; it is not our task to sketch the history of an art form but to examine whether it continues to answer the requirements of a biosocial need. It may be of some advantage, perhaps for the sake of bringing a contrast into high relief, to analyze the contemporary function of the dance. This contrast is presented to show the biosocial impoverishment of our species and complete our outline of the phylogenetic process.

Today, the dance is hardly ever the function of the group as a whole. Going to a dance very often means "going out," that is outside the group, preferably in twos. In the age of the tango (1900), the shimmy (1920), or the jitterbug (at the time of writing), the dance has been reduced to the role of being a medium of courtship, of sexual titillation, and of motor frenzy. The modern dance may serve sexual and matrimonial purposes well, but these purposes can hardly be described as communal. The couple arrive *en deux* and rarely join oth-

ers among the dancers. The big city dance halls, and the dance floors of restaurants and night clubs are removed from the community, are outside the community. It is perhaps this character of such places which makes them eminently suitable for the purposes of present-day dancing.

Apart from the popular couple dances, we have spectacular stage dancing, ballet, etc.; but these belong to the split world of performers and audiences, and with these, we are not concerned here. After all, the hypertrophy of audiences is just another symptom of desocialization, a symptom which calls for specific study.

Today, the commercialization of dance activities has largely stabilized the hegemony of the isolate couple dance. The dance has ceased to be an opportunity when participation inertia can be overcome and when an ease in intimate contact can be developed. It is no longer an important formalizer of social skill, of manners, and it has become arid, businesslike or downright erotic, and non-social.

The dance today is a degenerated survival of an ancient group language, a language which was meant to be a medium of solidarity, self-expression, and release. In our times, it is an empty form at best, when it does not serve other ulterior ends.

The "taxi dance hall" represents a logical stage in the history of the dance. Here, commercialization is complete, and the beginnings of prostitution are apparent. The form of dance practiced in these places is a mechanical, overtly sexual pastime for thousands of solitary rejected men and a spurious source of income for hundreds of women, many of whom combine this work with prostitution. P. G. Cressey writes: "It is significant to note. . . that the more regular patron is seldom a member of a gang. . . the institution serves chiefly the distraught, the individualized and the egocentric." And: "There is little conversation. The patron may sit for hours beside others of his sex without conversing with them. The girls, likewise, when not dancing stand for long periods beside each other without talking." Cressey comes to the conclusion that, "In the last analysis the problem of the taxi dance hall can be regarded as the problem of the modern city," in which the criteria of life are "mobility, impersonality and anonymity."

There is no reliable material available on modern dancing habits in the home or in semi-public, exclusive places. Whatever the merits of these recreations may be, they are often delimited from the community by class, and are occasions for couple dancing. At best, these are harmless play-forms of the parlor game type or they are ceremonious, socialite shows in both of which the dance is merely an optional activity of individuals — not a communal ritual of all those present. The competitive features of social life dominate over the cooperative communal ones: physical attractiveness, wealth and rank, achievements of many kinds and so on are assessed and compared. Approval or rejection is then registered through the very media of

dance etiquette.

The history of the choral dance shows a continuous decline which runs parallel with the long-drawn-out process of desocialization. The choral dance is not merely a symptom of group integration but also a uniquely ancient sustainer of biosocial group life. Sachs notes, "The decline of the choral dance is a cause and an indication of social development. The choral dance, communal dances, demand a compact social order: they require an association in the dance which is something more than the current execution of a series of figures and movements." The breaking up of rural communities by the Industrial Revolution and the rise of individualism stopped the choral dances and surrendered the floor, or the village green, to the couple dances. Huizinga went as far as to describe the suppression of the choral dance as a symptom of declining culture.



This view implies that the process we labeled "desocialization" and defined as the cultural limitation of man's biosocial participation is in itself a manifestation of declining culture. On the other hand, we should stress that the perpetuation and further growth of a desocializing culture involves the inevitability of its own eventual destruction. Desocialization is decay which affects the entire social-cultural life of human communities; this decay has been speeded up during the last few centuries and contemporary culture is pregnant with catastrophe.

This process of desocialization is simultaneous with the process of cultural development; in other words, while there is culture there will always be frustrations imposed on man's biosocial needs. Culture is not incompatible with a biosocially balanced life provided it comprises an awareness of biological sociality and the institutions through which this awareness can be expressed.

Naturally, the choral dance was by no means the only medium of biosocial contact in pre-cultural human society. It is the only known non-economic social form which, having existed pre-culturally, continued throughout the historically charted centuries.

On the pre-cultural level, the relatedness of the individual to his fellows was intimate and absolute. With the emergence of cultural forms, a certain measure of rigidity appears which grows at the expense of spontaneous and unreserved participation. The decline of the choral dances is a decline of biosocial life. First, it becomes formalized by culture; and second, is eliminated by a later culture which has become incompatible with it; the disappearance of the choral dances coincides with a historical event, a profound social-cultural change, i.e., the Industrial Revolution.

FE Note: This is an excerpted version of Halmos' article which appears in *Man Alone: Alienation in Modern Society* (Dell 1962)

Illustration above: Stephen Goodfellow; page 20: from *The Goddess Book of Days*, Diane Stein (The Crossing Press 1992)

It's easy to understand how images have come to replace the realities at the heart of our lives. When reality appears to have nothing to offer us half so seductive as images, why not? On the subconscious level, we "know" that the world has little to give in the way of bliss, ecstasy, love, adventure, luxury, joy, etc. —little but work, disappointment, rejection, failure, sickness, isolation, boredom, and death. We "know" this because we learn it at school—it's the unspoken subtext of nearly all "education" and other forms of therapy.

Even more stunningly effective, the message is embedded in every commodity we buy. When capital realized that materiality acts as a limitation on economic growth, it launched itself into the limitless aether of the image. The image was to be made more valuable than the thing itself, than the mere lump of excremental reality so abject in its slavery to space and time, supply and demand, production and consumption. In contemplating the Paris market price of apples and pears in 1799 and deducing therefrom the miseries of civilization, even Charles Fourier never dreamed that the apple could be virtually replaced by its own image.

The breakdown of things into images is already presaged or contained *in nuce* in the earliest technologies of our modernity. For instance, writers on the first railroads noted how the landscape—once experienced at organic speeds such as that of humans and horses—was now leached of its actual physical presence by railway speed and reduced to a flickering-past of images. This flickering already foretold kinematics and the fetishized image of the modern it made possible. (Edison's first film: *The Train Robber*.)

Although the image would appear to have no limits, and in theory can be eternal and omnipotent, in practice it may suffer a certain mysterious fatigue, analogous in the bodiless realm to metal fatigue in the densest realm of materiality. Now that we seem to have reached a certain plateau of image-perfection, perhaps even a terminal state, one might expect a parallel perfection of seductivity. But in its apotheosis, the image is suddenly unveiled to the subconscious as *nothing but* an image.

The result: panic. The first impulse is to believe that more money and state-of-the-art image machinery will restore the image to its

powerful anodyne effects and once more anaesthetize the unbearable desire for authentic lived experience. The zenith of this panic is the Internet, in which all media without exception have been subsumed. And almost without exception, everyone I know has succumbed to its intoxication. If TV is fifth-rate heroin, the Net is almost second rate. Most remnants of the movement of the Social—in this country

anyway—seem to have accepted the illusion of interactivity as a substitute for action. "Activism" now means running a website. The others, it appears, simply immerse themselves in the image and carry on in the old Work/Consume/Die pattern they were educated and trained for.

Given all this, what really strikes me as astonishing is the poor quality of the illusion. The road-to-Damascus moment came for me about six years ago when I was standing one day on the corner of Broadway and Houston St., looking idly about at the hundreds of advertisements and images on display and suddenly realized that there wasn't *one* item on offer that I'd take as a free gift, much less pay for. What a sad unsexy collection of useless crap. True, there were many bimbos, hunks, and Kute Kidz on display (appearing to enjoy the various commodities with downright erotic intensity) and perhaps I might've bought one of *them* if they were on sale—but of course, they weren't. They were only images.

Another dire truth known to the subconscious is this: the interests of Capital are so powerful that any overt opposition to them combining coherent critique with actual praxis can and probably will be violently suppressed and eradicated by the force of a technology beyond the comprehension much less control of any mere human being. Carrot and stick: commodity intoxication and driving fear, lightly tamped down and kept out of sight by a consciousness that needs six to

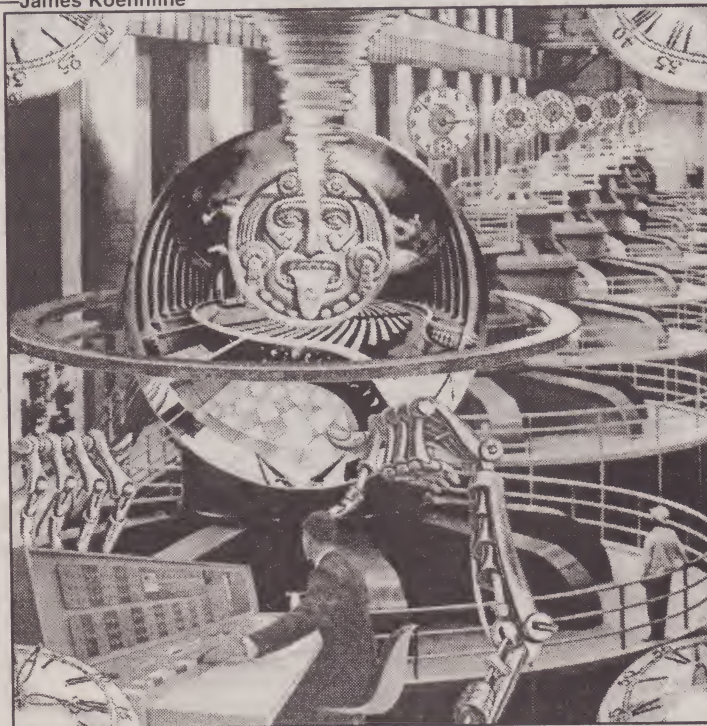
fourteen hours a day immersion in media just to remain functional. I do it myself, but with books and writing, a form of mediation over which I feel I can exercise some control, if only because the tech-level is so outmoded and *déclassé*. Writing was the first "media," of course, and shouldn't be exempted from any critique of the image; all technologies of information are still "text-based."

Leaving aside the question of any practical strategic revolutionary response to the tyranny of the image, the question of a cultural re-

Tectum Theatrum

by Hakim Bey

—James Koehnline



The only new formal aspect of the Tectum Theatrum [Secret Theater] would be its "secrecy," its active and conscious resistance to mediation and commodification.

sponse still remains. On one hand, all cultural activity can be subsumed into the Image and rendered into commodity forms. But, in order to accomplish this, the cultural activity must be mediated, "drawn away into representation." So, on the other hand, cultural activities—arts, creativity—appear to escape absorption into the totality to the extent they remain unmediated. Given the vampiric hunger of the media for "content," this avoidance of mediation (or at least some rough practical form of avoidance) can only be achieved through (a) total abysmal failure, or (2) great deliberation. Years ago, I envisioned various deliberate tactics of avoidance and advocated "Immediatism," or creative activity free of (or at least antagonistic towards) mediation by the totality. I suggested that physical presence, and non-use of certain technologies, might constitute two practical sine-qua-nons for Immediatist art.

Every music recording is the tombstone of a live performance. Every film/video the sepulchre of Artaud's real theater. Every text the grave of some speech-act. In the past, and even now, we value all these reproductions for the traces they contain of some imaginable experience. But by now, perhaps, we are buried and suffocated in so much lack of presence, so much unrealized desire, that art itself has taken on sickly and sinister airs, charnelhouse odors, ectoplasmic taints.

One possible form of Immediatism might be called the *Tectum Theatrum* or Secret Theater (*tectus-a-um*, subterranean, hidden, secret; *protected*, *tectonic*). I visualize it as quite conventional and old-fashioned in form, although making use of *all* old forms simultaneously—the Romantic ideal—theater, speech, painting and sculpture, music, dance—perhaps also ritual and entheogenic ceremonialism—or pure festival—etc. There might even be "roles" for us tech-bound types like writers and filmmakers if we can act within the confines of "media-free" art.

The only new formal aspect of the *Tectum Theatrum* would be its

"secrecy," its active and conscious resistance to mediation and commodification. Ivan Illich never once appeared on television, because he felt it could only distort the delicate complexity of his philosophy and ethics. Guy Debord never granted an interview (and withdrew his films from circulation). This kind of purism can make inhuman demands on working artists. How to earn a living?

Tectum Theatrum would have to try to avoid martyrdom on the Scylla of rigid principles as well as the Charybdis of mediation and "success." But it would seem necessary to adopt some degree of militancy, even with all the attendant dangers of Puritanism, in an attempt to build a *culture* of secret disengagement from the emptiness of the Image. A certain iconoclasm seems called for, a certain deliberate "poorness" (as Grotowski called it). Possibly "failure" remains the last possible *outside* in a universe of enclosure. In this sense, we could speak of the luxury of failure as well as the pleasure of secrecy.

Everything that becomes implicated in the totality of the Image seems somehow "always already" known and yet never wholly our own. The only possible means to keep creation open to adventure and risk, and to meaning and value, would constitute a refusal of mediation and commodification. This doesn't mean that the artist must starve; we can have direct exchange between artists and enjoyers of art, without the mediation of Capital in its denser manifestations such as the "recording industry", or advertising.

Luddism is not "anti" *techné*, it only wants to smash machines that "hurt the community," whether economically or spiritually. In this sense, *Tectum Theatrum* might be called luddite art. Beyond this, I resist all temptation to speculate about what it ought to be, or could be. Such theorizing would threaten the specificity and presence of "Our Art," which needs no manifestoes, ideologies, theoreticians, or leaders. It either will be or it won't, and mere speculation will never decide the issue.

—February 2003

The Ray Charles Riots



FE Note: Mike Davis's captivating new collection of essays, *Dead Cities, and Other Tales* (New Press) chronicles many facets of the long-running anti-authoritarian struggles to reclaim public spaces. The book includes a 2001 article for on teenage riots in California before 1965, "As Bad as the H-Bomb." Police, professional Red baiters, and Hearst's newspapers warned that California's teenage riots, illegal drag races, beatniks, and heavy petting at drive-ins was a dangerous pattern of subversion orchestrated by ingeniously sinister Communists.

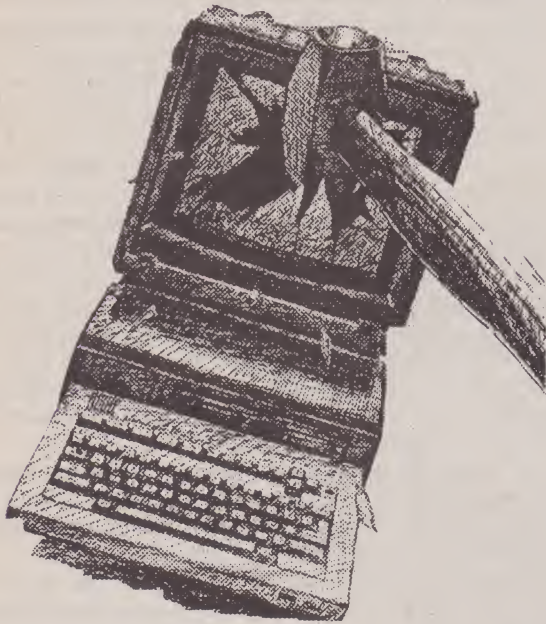
Davis, however, suggests that these were attempts by working-class kids to "wrest as much freedom, exhilaration, and sheer mileage from the Night as possible" while looking down the double-barrels of a future dominated by Fordist misery and the constant fear of nuclear annihilation. The following is an excerpt from Davis's article

The second weekend in September, as usual for the summer's finale, was a scorcher in Los Angeles, and the largest crowds of the season packed the beaches to escape the 100-degree-plus temperatures in the valleys. Six thousand fans were lucky enough to have tickets to hear Ray Charles perform at the Hollywood Bowl Sunday evening. The blind rhythm-and-blues genius was at the height of an extraordinary "crossover" popularity that brought huge racially mixed audiences together outside of the South.

His latest tour, however, had been plagued by logistical snafus and disputes with local authorities. A week earlier, police had turned fire hoses on a thousand angry fans in Portland after Charles's plane had been grounded in Seattle. The crowd, in turn, wrecked the Palais Royale Ballroom and smashed car and office windows in the downtown area, the first riot in the city's history.

The Hollywood Bowl concert began without a hitch under the vigilant eye of LAPD music critics. As the tempo increased, hundreds of teenagers—Black, white, Latino—found the beat irresistible. "Some of the screaming youngsters," the *Examiner* reported the next day, "organized a dance group and put on an impromptu performance of what police said were objectionable dances, including the popular 'Jungle Bunny.'" Whether the dancing was too "dirty," too interracial, or both, the police decided to stop the concert. The lights were turned on, and when the "screaming, gyrating fans" protested, reserves were summoned from the LAPD's Hollywood Division. The ensuing "teen riot," spilling out into the parking lot and adjacent Griffith Park, involved an estimated 500 to 600 members of the audience; ten were arrested.

Revolution is not an AOL Keyword*



You will not be able to stay home, dear Netizen.
You will not be able to plug in, log on and opt out.
You will not be able to lose yourself in Final Fantasy,
Or hold your Kazaa download queues,
Because revolution is not an AOL Keyword.

Revolution is not an AOL Keyword.
Revolution will not be brought to you on Hi-Def TV
Encrypted with a warning from the FBI.
Revolution will not have a jpeg slideshow of Dubya
Calling the cattle and leading the incursion by
Secretary Rumsfeld, General Ashcroft and Dick Cheney
Riding nuclear warheads on their way to Iraq,
Or North Korea, or Iran.

Revolution is not an AOL Keyword.
Revolution will not be powered by Microsoft on
The Next-Generation Secure Computing Base
And will not star Pamela Anderson and Tommy Lee
Or Larry Lessig and Martha Stewart.

Revolution will not promise penile enlargement.
Revolution will not get rid of spam.
Revolution will not earn you up to \$5000 a month
Working from home, because revolution is not
An AOL Keyword, Brother.

There will be no screen grabs of you and
Jeeves the Butler one-click shopping at My Yahoo,
Or outbidding a shady grandma on eBay for
That refurbished iPod 20-gig.

MSNBC.com will not predict election results in Florida
Or fact-check the Drudge Report.
Revolution is not an AOL Keyword.

There will be no webcast of Wil Wheaton boxing
Barney the Dinosaur on the dancefloor at DNA.
There will be no mob- or wiki- blog of Richard Stallman
Strolling through Redmond in a medieval robe and halo
As St. iGNUcious of the Church of Emacs
That he has been saving
For just the proper occasion.
Survivor, The Osbournes, and Joe Millionaire
Will no longer be so damned relevant, and
People will not care if Carrie hooks up again with
Mr. Big on Sex and the City because Information
Wants To Be Free even while Knowledge Is Power.
Revolution is not an AOL Keyword.

There will be no final pictures from inside the
World Trade Center in the instant replay.
There will be no final pictures from inside the
World Trade Center in the instant replay.

There will be no RealVideo of 2600-reading,
Linux-booting white hat hackers
And Mickey Mouse in the public domain.
The theme song will not be written by Jack Valenti or
Hilary Rosen, nor sung by Metallica, Dr. Dre,
Christina Aguilera, Matchbox 20, or Blink-182.
Revolution is not an AOL Keyword.

Revolution will not be right back after
Pop-up ads about eCommerce, eTailers, or eContent.
You will not have to worry about a
Cookie in your browser, a bug in your email, or a
Worm in your recycling bin.
Revolution will not run faster with Intel inside.
Revolution, dude, is not getting a Dell.
Revolution will increase your Google rank.

Revolution is not an AOL Keyword, is not an AOL Keyword,
Is not an AOL Keyword, is not an AOL Keyword.
Revolution will be no stream or download, dear Netizen;
Revolution must still be live.

*See generally Gil Scott-Heron,
The Revolution Will Not Be Televised.

—posted by Eddan Katz to the
Berkeley Intellectual Property Weblog, Spring 2003
—Illustration by Kathy Rashid,
Fifth Estate cover, Spring 1983 (#312)

Running on Emptiness: The Pathology of Civilization, By John Zerzan, Feral House, Los Angeles, 2002, 214pp, \$12

John Zerzan hardly needs an introduction here; few modern anarchist writers are as well-known, controversial, and divisive. Zerzan is the founder and leading philosopher of what he calls anarcho-primitivism.

What separates anarcho-primitivist ideas from those of classical anarchism is that they are based more on a critique of civilization, representation, and interpretation than on a critique of power. A recent collection of his essays, *Running on Emptiness*, serves as a good introduction to his ideas.

Zerzan believes that all of the ills of modern society originate in humanity's adoption of symbolic thought, leading, he and others postulate, to language, division of labor, agriculture, animal domestication, and eventually, to the gamut of problems the world faces today.

The answer, then, is to abolish all forms of technology, up to and including the use of language, number, and time. Activists and writers who use a different conceptual framework, or those who address specific issues such as United States foreign policy are missing the point, according to Zerzan.

It is on this basis that Zerzan launches his bitter attacks on other anarchist writers. In two essays, "Who is Noam Chomsky" and "Hakim Bey, Postmodern 'Anarchist,'" those who deviate from Zerzan's line of thinking are criticized for being insufficiently radical.

A John Zerzan drinking game: a shot each time he accuses another writer of being "liberal," "reformist," or "post-modern."

This is the single biggest problem with Zerzan's writing, including his presence in the letters sections of several anarchist publications. His style is combative, polemical and intolerant, recalling the unproductive infighting that has reduced socialism to its current state.

He slams periodicals like the *Fifth Estate* for hosting open-minded discussions between different tendencies within the modern anarchist movement. While passionate debate is healthy, doctrinaire squabbling serves only to take energy away from realizing anarchism's core principles of anti-authoritarianism and self-organization.

Zerzan barely addresses the question of how anarcho-primitivism could be applied on a large scale. To abolish technology universally requires the use of coercion. This is where

Zerzan most needs the critique of power and authority that is lacking from his work: after all, it is worth remembering that several fascist movements in the 20th century were based in part on the idea of the return to simpler times. If Zerzan wants the entire population of the world to voluntarily embrace anarcho-primitivism, he needs to find more convincing arguments.

As with many collections of essays, there is some degree of redundancy in *Running on Emptiness*. After a few pieces, those with shorter attention spans may be tempted to give up.

There are a few unexpected gems, though. The most accessible piece in the book is a talk with writer Derrick Jensen, another writer who locates the origins of authority and exploitation early in our history and deep in our culture. The more agreeable Jensen, who has a gift for articulating anarcho-primitivist ideas in personal terms, draws out Zerzan's best qualities.

There is also an unexpected piece of art criticism: despite being a one-sided endorsement of the abstract expressionists, it contains flashes of enthusiastic scholarship and sheds light on Zerzan's thinking on representation. In the last essay in the book, Zerzan draws an explicit connection between the failure of liberal democracy (representation in the political sphere) and symbolic thought (representation in the cognitive sphere).

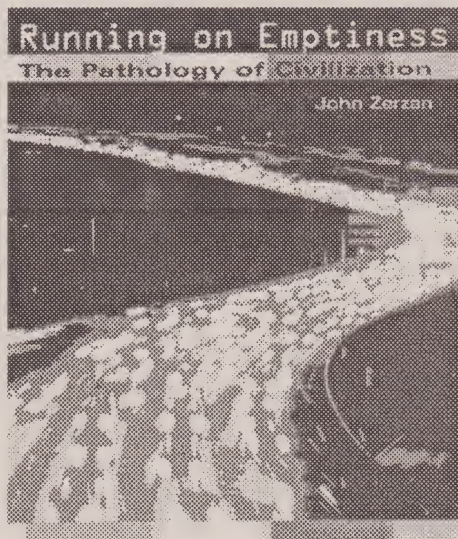
As he makes clear in his praise for abstract expressionist painters, he feels that it is the standing in of one thing for another—a picture of a bird standing in for a real bird, elected officials standing in for "the people"—that is the root cause of civilization's malaise. These ideas in and of themselves are provocative and worthy of discussion.

Arguing seems natural to us: as anarchists, we have all chosen to be at odds with many of the unquestioned principles of our civilization.

However, at least within the confines of the anarchist movement, we still have a choice: we can either assert our beliefs as forcefully as possible, shouting down those who disagree, or we can sit down and start listening to each other.

Unfortunately, John Zerzan directs his talents against many of those with whom he has the most in common. Reading *Running on Emptiness*, one is struck by how much we could gain if he finally decided to join the conversation.

—John Brinker, Asheville, May 2003



**A John Zerzan
drinking game: a
shot each time he
accuses another
writer of being
"liberal,"
"reformist," or
"postmodern."**

Anarchist Cabaret

The Anarchist and the Devil Do Cabaret, by Norman Nawrocki, Black Rose Books, 2002, 192pp, \$20

Earlier this year, while rummaging through my collection of oppositional music to find some anti-war material in order to counter Dubya's lies about the invasion and occupation of Iraq, I started my search by going back to the Gulf War of George I. One of the initial jewels to emerge from that pile of recordings was a 1991 cassette by Rhythm Activism, *War Is The Health of the State*.

That its message would still be fresh over a decade later is a tribute to the Empire's unrelenting oil wars and to the music itself. I remembered the band had been part of the 1986 anarchist Black Wedge Tour that Jean Smith of Mecca Normal had written about in a volume which I edited entitled *Sounding Off!*. Smith's article had peaked my interest, but I had to wait until band founder Norman Nawrocki's own book for a full blown account of life on the road during Rhythm Activism's 1998 agitprop tour of Europe.

However, the book is much more than an engaging chronicle of the twists and turns encountered by a "rebel news orchestra/rock and roll cabaret band." It is also a vehicle for a recurring series of what Nawrocki terms "urban fairy tales." These tales, floating in and out of the tour narrative, are brilliantly rendered in a style that is at turns poignant, haunting, whimsical, and philosophical.

For me, though, the heart of the book is Nawrocki's symbolic search for his anarchist musical ancestry. One persona in particular becomes the focus of this foray into ancestral origins, Nawrocki's uncle, Harry (another name for the Devil, of course). We meet Harry in this volume through his letters to Nawrocki's father, Franek. However, I decided, in keeping with the spirit of the book, to use my own poetic license as a reviewer to cobble together some excerpts from the letters printed in the text and place them in the context of other textual references and my own imagined correspondence between Harry and Norman himself, without Franek as the intermediary. The results appear in the following collaged conversation.

Dear Norman,

My musical nephew, where are you? Each time you do a European tour, you promise your father you'll come and see me, but we still have never met. I admit that I am hard to find these days because of my wanderings. People look at me now as if I was just another homeless, hungry and forgotten beggar. Yet I fought the Nazis once as part of the Polish Resistance; not with the nationalists, but with the anarchists, including one Jewish partisan who, being a klezmer, was like me, a violinist. We were based in the woods outside Krakow. I told Hitler to go fuck himself, and then I said the same thing to the new Communist Party bosses and bureaucrats after the war, and now I say it to the free marketeers of global capitalism. My friends have always been musicians, gypsies, circus performers, puppet makers, and radicals of all stripes. And, of course, my constant drinking companion has been the Devil himself.

As I once told your father, there is a brotherhood of men and women, and then there are those who, drunk with power, want to eliminate all that is human. As long as we fight wars, and not the idea of War itself, we will never have peace on this earth. I have no peace. Death to the Fascists! Death to the Warmakers! Long live the bears and the cave people of the world!

Though I missed you when you toured with your anarchist cabaret band, many people have told me that you inquired in relation to my whereabouts along the way. While sadly we didn't meet in person, I'd like to think that my spirit has danced in the flames of your fiddle on more than one occasion.

Love, Harry

Dear Uncle Harry,

At last a letter to me, and not my father, written in your own hand! People have told me all kinds of stories about you over the years. That you had lost your memory in a car accident or were imprisoned as a political dissident. Others swore you'd escaped from a mental institution or that you were on the run, or even murdered, as the result of a love triangle dating from your circus days.

Some said you'd drunk yourself to death on Polish vodka after losing part of your face in a Nazi booby trap during the war. As for me, I've always thought that, like the Devil, you inhabited my fiddle (on my best nights). Damn, Harry, I don't know if you'll ever get this letter, but, if you do, I just want to let you know that you have always been an inspiration, not only in musical terms, but also in regards to the passionate way you have lived your life.

I have always wanted to make music not only for dance concerts, but for occupying and taking over banks, city halls, factories and schools while dancing on the grave of apathy. Right now, I am on a North American tour with a series of what I call "Creative Resistance 101" workshops. They include: "Rebel Words 101," "Rebel Rhythms 101," "Rhythm Activism 101," "Radical Community Cabaret 101," "Humor for the Humorless Radical 101," and the "Art of Anarchism 101." I hope to show people how to use music, theatre, poetry, clowning, and art to create a culture of resistance.

Aside from Rhythm Activism, I am involved with a band called Bakunin's Bum. We recently did a CD entitled *Fight To Win* as a benefit for the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) here in Canada. It features the militant words of OCAP activists set to original music. Some of my collaborators on this CD are involved with the band Godspeed You Black Emperor! You might have heard that they recently got detained in Oklahoma by the FBI during the Iraq War for three hours of questioning as suspected terrorists while driving to Columbia, Missouri from a gig they'd played at Fort Worth. As a cultural terrorist myself, I can definitely relate to their situation.

**Love and Respect,
Norman**

**Review and imagined correspondence by:
Ron Sakolsky, Denman Island, April 2003**

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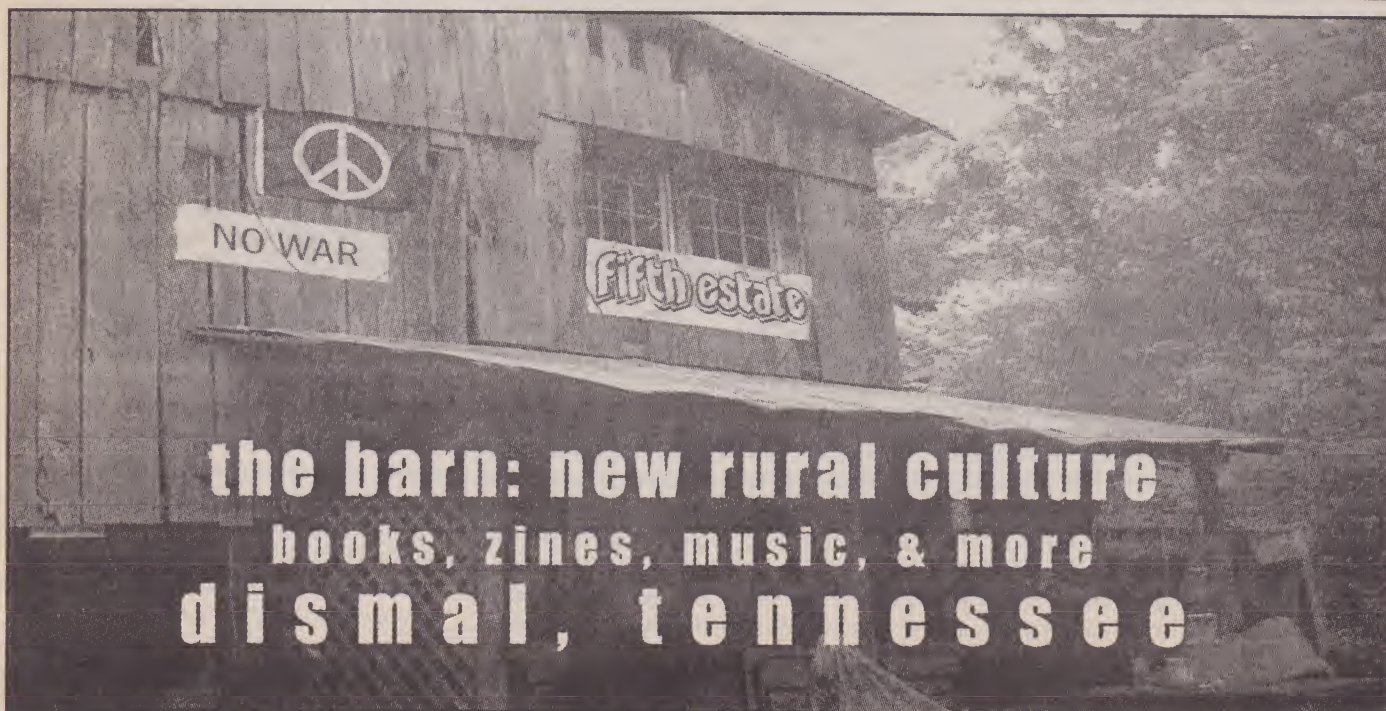
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Without AA

To the Fifth Estate:

The following is in response to "Anarchy and Alcohol" by the Crimethinc collective, a "painfully truncated" version of which was published in the Spring 2002 *Fifth Estate*. As an anarchist who is also an alcoholic and a drug addict, and who has remained abstinent for over nine years, I took a particular interest in the article.

I was delighted, and somewhat surprised, to note that the authors spared Alcoholics Anonymous the kind of derision that was afforded Baptist ministers. Surprised, as it has come to my attention that at least one anarchist writer has made a mini-career of bashing AA, and delighted, because without AA this wage slave would never have lived long enough, or certainly would never have (re)gained sufficient mental acuity, to have become an anarchist.

I might agree that, "Alcoholics Anonymous is just one more quasi-religious organization filling a social need that should already be provided for by anarchist community self-organizing." I say, I might agree, but first I would have to 1. look up the prefix *quasi* in the dictionary, and, 2. be informed of what *other* such organizations exist that serve similar needs. (I know of none, though that doesn't mean they don't exist.)

In my opinion... no, in my *experience*, AA is exceptional.

I know of no other organization, regardless of its religiosity or quasi-ness, whose primary work is done entirely by unpaid member/volunteers, that has no theology or priest class, and that has a formal policy forbidding the accumulation of funds or ownership of property. (Can Goodwill or the Salvation Army say as much?)

In fact, AA's social structure was consciously designed along explicitly anarchist lines! I am presently writing a short book on the subject. Perhaps, when I have succeeded in getting it published, the Crimethinc collective can review it for FE.

With that plug, I will return to the original comment quoted, that AA fills "a social need that should already be provided for by anarchist community self-organizing." In the admitted absence of such organizing, AA plays a vital and lifesaving role.

Anarchist critics who attack AA for its religiosity, while ignoring its anarchist structure, risk diverting alcoholics from AA completely. These alcoholics have few, or no, suitable alternatives.

Kudos, then, to Crimethinc, for its moderation. (Now *there* is a sentence you

Letters to the Fifth Estate



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We welcome letters commenting on our articles or other topics, but can't print every one we receive. Each, however, is read and considered for publication.

Letters via email or on disk are appreciated, but typewritten and legibly handwritten ones are acceptable. Length should not exceed two double-spaced pages. All submissions must have a name and return address, which will be withheld upon request.

Send to POB 201016, Ferndale MI 48220, or via email to fifthestatenewspaper@yahoo.com.

won't read everyday!)

For the class war, and whole wheat pasta,

don j

San Francisco

Iraq War Raging

To the Fifth Estate:

Thank you for another great issue of the *Fifth Estate*. Really liked the article on permaculture (see "Against Agriculture and in Defense of Cultivation") and how cultivating plants did not spell the downfall of humanity, as many primitivists seem to believe.

The Iraq war is raging as I write, and it's horrible. I've come to a realization about it that pains me greatly. For years, I've wondered why the US government and companies like DuPont, Hewlett Packard, and Bechtel would sell weapons of mass destruction to Saddam Hussein. Beyond the

motive of short-term monetary gain, it is becoming increasingly clear that this whole war was devised years ago.

They knew 30 years ago that the world's oil reserves would need to be controlled to assure cheap gas for the good ol' USA. As the years passed, they forged close ties with the Saudis. Their eyes wandered to the second largest oil deposits in Iraq.

They knew Saddam was a brutal dictator (seeing as the CIA helped put him in power), but shipments of Anthrax spores, chemicals for making chemical weapons, missile technology, and nuclear technology were all shipped to Iraq during the 1980s—even after he gassed the Kurds. Why? Why would Ronald Reagan and George Bush (the first) arm a vicious dictator with weapons of mass destruction (Ws of MD)? The answer?

Because it is the perfect pretext for war.

Because, years later, Ws of MD would provide the excuse to invade the country, kill Saddam, and seize control of Iraq's vast oil resources.

Why is it that the same companies that sold Saddam weapons are now first in line to get the billion dollar contracts to rebuild oil wells? Dick Cheney's company Halliburton also stands to profit from the war.

I've confronted pro-war people here about these facts and seem to get one of three responses:

#1. "So what! Let's take their fucking oil!"

#2 "I didn't know that! Well, now we'll take care of Reagan and Bush I's mistakes."

#3 "That can't be true! We would never sell Saddam any Ws of MD."

America, are you blind? Will you never wake up from your slumber? Or is it more comforting to believe the lies that your leaders tell you? Then, you don't have to admit your complicity, involvement, and support for all the death and destruction—from Saddam's killing the Kurds with our Ws of MD to George senior and Slick Willy Clinton killing thousands upon thousands Iraqis with war and sanctions, to all the senseless slaughter of "Operation Iraqi freedom."

When the next attack comes to our shores, when more people here die, will you once again wave the flag or throw up your hands in shock and horror, amazed that anyone would want to hurt us? Will the families of people killed in this war want revenge just like the families of some 9-11 victims vowed retribution? Yes, the people killed in Iraq will fuel hatred against America. As anti-Americanism grows all

over the world, the next attackers might have global support.

Do you feel safer now? Was it worth it to keep gas under two dollars per gallon?

Bill Sermon
Asheville, North Carolina

White Lightening

To the Fifth Estate:

I ran with the "Wobs" in the "Dirty Thirties" and got a good taste of "pie in the sky, ala mode." Bless 'em! They have been proven correct. We never got the gold-plated toilet seats in our labor agreements, though. An oversight?

You might invest a bit of the enclosed magnificent donation on a taste of that White Lightening the backwoods to so well.

Jack Williamson

FE responds: Thanks for your generous donation, Jack. You and others who are FE Sustainers or simply add a bit (or a lot) when renewing your subscription are the life blood of our financial stability. But, no to the offer of diverting a portion to some Tennessee hooch. Every penny donated to the paper goes for its production; no salaries are paid.

The Most Feathers

Dear folks:

The last time I subscribed, I asked about where to get some of the old "classic" Fifth Estates. Mine got lost when I moved back home. I'm an American Indian Movement (AIM) activist and I need to refresh my arguments for some of our "leaders" who don't seem to understand our traditional ways are not based on authority-the one with the most feathers has the most say and power.

It might be argued we are amongst the first anarchists with our decision making procedures (consensual) and our councils gather as a circle of equals, not a chain of command or a pyramidal hierarchy.

Well, best of luck. I hope the new editorial collective doesn't forget us prime people-especially at this time when the whole world is being Bushwhacked!

In Solidarity,
Bill Lewis
Maitland, Nova Scotia

Walker Lane replies: Unfortunately, back issues of the Fifth Estate are not currently available. When our main editorial

facilities moved to Tennessee last year from our Detroit offices, a friend of the paper agreed to store them in his basement. There they currently sit, unorganized and inaccessible. We intend to correct this situation soon and make the last 38 years of papers available again.

And, please count on us to not to "forget" the cultures of people whose traditions contain the planetary wisdom which can act, in part, as a guide to reinvisioning the world.

Prizn in Amerika

To the Fifth Estate:

I am a prisoner of the state; please continue my free subscription. You keep me in touch with the real world.

My keepers have only held back one issue in over a year. Last Summer's, I think. Said it crossed some sexual line; now there's anarchy.

"Prizn" in amerika is almost the best place to be these days. Or, at least, the most honest. At least inside we know we're monitored, manipulated, bullied and lied to by the keepers. Daily. Private prisons like this establishment are very scary.

All of the citizens out there think they're free. Or, maybe not so much now. The crust is cracking on the government's good-guy mask. The horrid, ugly truth is

being revealed for all the world to see. And, it looks like George W.!

RM
Burlington, Colorado

Threatening Symbol

Dear Fifth Estate:

As you can see by my enclosed Mail Violation Notice that I received, the Oregon Department of Corrections seems to have a problem with inmates receiving mail with anarchist symbols on it.

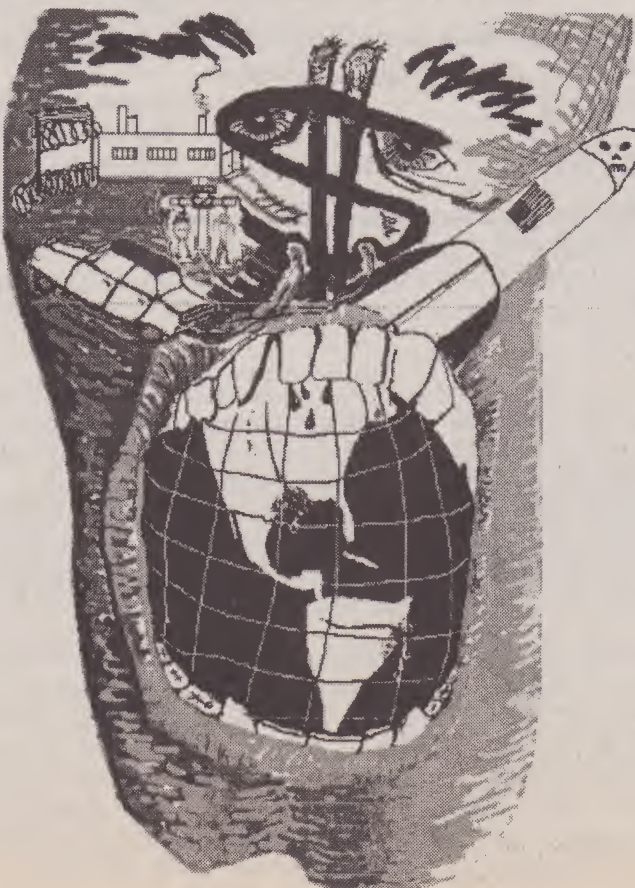
So, unless you are willing to assist me in a civil action against the prison authorities could you please blot out the offending symbols so I can receive the paper from you?

LB
Ontario, Oregon

E.B. Maple responds: Several prisoners had their subscriptions returned due to our issues containing anarchist circle A's. This is what LB's jailer stated as the reason for the exclusion of our Winter issue: "Contains material that threatens or is detrimental to the security, safety, health, good order, or discipline of the facility, inmate rehabilitation, or facilitates criminal activity."

This is what these twisted personalities see in the letter A with a circle around it. We reported on this in our last edition in an article which had an A graphically blotted out. Some prisons refused our paper even when the A is covered over with magic marker.

But the authoritarian, small-minded jailers can breathe easier this issue since it is devoid of the threatening symbol.



2003 RADICAL CALENDAR

Please send calendar events to the Fifth Estate keeping in mind our quarterly schedule. Deadline for the fall 2003 edition is August 1.
fifthstatenewspaper@yahoo.com PO Box 6 Liberty, TN 37095 (Visit the Fifth Estate table at events in Michigan & Tennessee!)

July 18-27 —Natural Building Workshop. Come learn alternative, earth friendly ways of building a home. Hosted by the Sequatchie Valley Institute at Moonshadow. <http://www.svionline.org> (423) 949-5922.

July 25-28—Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC) Summer Training Institute. Education, training, movement building. <http://www.seac.org/sti/> 215-222-4711

August 10—Remember Hiroshima/Nagasaki & Stop the Bombs. March to and rally /action at the Y12 nuclear weapons plant in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. stopthebombs.org 865-483-8202

August 15-17—Midwest 'Zine Fest. Trumbullplex, Detroit. Three days of sharing skills and ideas, trading zines and projects, dance parties and shows, and more fun community building activities.
xeroxthis@hotmail.com www.geocities.com/xeroxthis/

Aug 29-Sept 1—Twin Oaks Communities Conference Ecovillages, communes, co-ops, cohousing, and more. A week-end of workshops, community-building, and fun.
138 Twin Oaks Rd, Louisa VA 23093. 540-894-5126.
www.twinoaks.org/conference/ conference@twinoaks.org

September 6—The 26th Annual Dally in the Alley. Cass Corridor, Detroit. The original, classic, all day street festival in the 'hood. dallyinthealley.net/

September 10-14 —Shut Down the WTO. Cancun, Mexico
<http://mexico.indymedia.org/>

Sept 15-21—Idapalooza Fruit Jam. Join us at Ida, a queer artists' community, for a week of gender bending musical invention, impromptu jams, and hot performances. Contact Ida at 904 Vickers Hollow Rd, Dowelltown, TN 37059, or www.planetida.com

October 3-5, 2003—The Anarchist People of Color Conference. Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. contact APOC Conference-Michigan c/o BANCO #19962 167 N. Drake Road, Kalamazoo, MI 49006 kombao@hotmail.com

October 25, 2003—New Orleans Bookfair The annual celebration of muckraking and mischief for independent publishers and artists. Open to the public. Free.
nolabookfair.com

November 20-21—Mobilization Against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), Miami. Counter the ministerial meetings which will take place in Miami those dates, the next phase of negotiating for leaders in the hemisphere. (727) 896-8224. <http://www.flfairtrade.org/TBAGweb/FFT.htm>

November 22-23—Shut Down the School of the Americas/WHISC—Columbus, GA, Fort Benning. Annual Vigil and Nonviolent Direct Action. <http://www.soaw.org> 202-234-3440

August 30 to September 2, 2004—Come to New York and Protest at the Republican Convention! The Republicans will bring their Coronation of the Emperor to New York City.

Profane Existence #41 (Winter-Spring 2003) & #42 (Spring-Summer 2003)
PO Box 8722 Minneapolis, MN 55408 USA 4-issue subscriptions: \$8 U.S., Mexico, and Canada; (cash preferred; M.O.s payable to "Blackened"). Free to prisoners.
www.profaneexistence.com

It would be easy for the self-appointed ayatollahs of anarchist ideology to mock the Lagit-punk *Profane Existence* crew as "lifestylists." But these two issues of PE boil with more energy per column inch than two years' worth of the sneers and bad faith found in the pages of those more-anarcho-than-thou publications.

Check out Dan's editorial in #41, "You Can't Circle the 'A' in Apathy," which blasts the corporate commodification of punk rock and calls upon anarcho-punks and political thrash/crusts to save themselves from capitalist encroachment by moving beyond a narrow "focus on bands and music" to "anarchism and political content, not only in theory, but in practice."

PE #41 has a conversation on direct democracy with members of the Seward Community Café workers collective in Minneapolis and an exclusive report on endangered wild Atlantic salmon off the coast of Maine. Issue #42 features lots of rants about "Oil War II"; a thoughtful article by Damien on homocore/outpunk and the need to bridge the queer, anarchist, and punk undergrounds; a chat with Dick of the always-out-raged Subhumans. There's also a nasty pull-out poster consisting of the blood-red words "How Much Shock and Awe Can You Take?" angrily superimposed on more than 100 explicit color photographs of dead and wounded Iraqis. You don't have to mosh to be inspired by *Profane Existence*... you just have to want to raise holy hell. —Don LaCoss



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Give to the *Fifth Estate* :

Comrades, We really appreciate all the positive feedback we've received on the recent issues. However, last time's shameless plea for funds failed to raise enough money to keep us fully functioning. As you know, this is a volunteer-run magazine, and none of us gets paid. All cash goes directly into printing the magazines, mailing them, and maintaining a modest office. Our subscribers and sustainers are our primary support system. Please consider buying a gift subscription for a friend or becoming a sustainer today.

Contribute to the *Fifth Estate*

Next issue's theme: INSUBORDINATION (deadline August 1)

Just say "No!" Send us your true-life adventures, fables, theories, and suggestions for noncompliance, disobedience, mutiny, refusal, unsubmitiveness, waywardness, uncooperativeness, defiance, repudiation, objection, and nonconsent. Reviews & reports: 800 words or less. Feature articles: 1600-3200 words.

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